LIFE

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

VOL. IX.



H. L. Thrale

Hester Lynch Piozzi

SAMUEL JOHNSON, L L.D.



THE LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

INCLUDING

A JOURNAL OF HIS TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES;

BY

JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

NEW EDITION,

WITH NUMEROUS ADDITIONS AND NOTES,

BY

THE RIGHT HON. JOHN WILSON CROKER, M.P.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

TWO SUPPLEMENTARY VOLUMES OF JOHNSONIANA,

BY HAWKINS, PIOZZI, MURPHY, TYERS, REYNOLDS,
MALONE, NICHOLS, STEEVENS, CUMBERLAND,
AND OTHERS.

AND NOTES BY VARIOUS HANDS.

ALSO, UPWARDS OF

FIFTY ENGRAVED ILLUSTRATIONS.

IN TEN VOLUMES.

VOL. IX.

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MDCCCLIII.

NOTICE.

THE Editor, after preparing this volume for the press, feels more than ever satisfied as to the arrangement ultimately adopted with respect to the scattered JOHNSONIANA of Boswell's friends and rivals. In the notes to the preceding volumes, he has presented all those *short* passages of other writers, which seemed to bear decidedly on the statements in Boswell's text: in this, and in the succeeding volume, the reader has presented to him a mass of miscellaneous Anecdotes and Sayings, gathered from nearly a hundred different publications; which could not have been produced as notes to Boswell, without overloading and perplexing his pages, but which are essential to the completion of the intellectual portrait of Johnson.

Taken by themselves alone, these *Ana* might, it is presumed, claim a place with the best books of that popular description, in our own or in any other

language. They form, it will hardly be disputed, one of the richest collections of Materials for Thinking that can be pointed out in literature; and constitute, eminently, a Manual such as Johnson himself was so fond of — "*one of those portable books, that you may carry to the fire-side, and hold readily in your hand — the most useful after all.*"

The beautiful head of Mrs. Piozzi, which faces the title-page of this volume, is from Sir Joshua Reynolds's portrait; which, on the dispersion of the Streatham Gallery, passed into the hands of that accomplished lover of art and literature, Samuel Boddington, Esq., and which was never before engraved.

October 28. 1835.

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THE
LIFE
OF
SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

JOHNSONIANA.

PART I.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON,
BY MRS. PIOZZI.

[Published in 1785.]

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1 *Introductory.*

I AM aware that many will say, I have not spoken highly enough of Dr. Johnson; but it will be difficult for those who say so, to speak more highly. If I have described his manners as they were, I have been careful to show his superiority to the common forms of common life. It is surely no dispraise to an oak that it does not bear jessamine; and he who should plant honey-suckle round Trajan's column, would not be thought to adorn, but to disgrace it. When I have said, that he was more a man of genius than of learning, I mean not to take from the one part of his character that

which I willingly give to the other. The erudition of Mr. Johnson proved his genius; for he had not acquired it by long or profound study: nor can I think those characters the greatest which have most learning driven into their heads, any more than I can persuade myself to consider the river Jenisca as superior to the Nile, because the first receives near seventy tributary streams in the course of its unmarked progress to the sea, while the great parent of African plenty, flowing from an almost invisible source, and unenriched by any extraneous waters, except eleven nameless rivers, pours his majestic torrent into the ocean by seven celebrated mouths.

2. *Bodily Exercises.*

Mr. Johnson was very conversant in the art of attack and defence by boxing, which science he had learned from his uncle Andrew (1), I believe; and I have heard him descant upon the age when people were received, and when rejected, in the schools once held for that brutal amusement, much to the admiration of those who had no expectation of his skill in such matters, from the sight of a figure which precluded all possibility of personal prowess; though, because he saw Mr. Thrale one day leap over a cabriolet stool, to show that he was not tired after a chase of fifty miles or more, *he* suddenly jumped over it too; but in a way so strange and so unwieldy, that our terror lest he should break his bones took from us even the power of laughing.

3. *Showing off Children.*

The trick which most parents play with their children of showing off their newly-acquired accomplishments, disgusted Mr. Johnson beyond expression: he had been treated so himself, he said, till he absolutely loathed his father's caresses, because he knew they were sure

(1) [See *ante*, vol. i. p. 312.]

to precede some unpleasing display of his early abilities; and he used, when neighbours came o' visiting, to run up a tree that he might not be found and exhibited, such, as no doubt he was, a prodigy of early understanding. His epitaph upon the duck he killed by treading on it at five years old, "Here lies poor duck," &c. is a striking example of early expansion of mind, and knowledge of language; yet he always seemed more mortified at the recollection of the bustle his parents made with his wit, than pleased with the thoughts of possessing it. "That," said he to me one day, "is the great misery of late marriages; the unhappy produce of them becomes the plaything of dotage: an old man's child," continued he, "leads much such a life, I think, as a little boy's dog, teased with awkward fondness, and forced, perhaps, to sit up and beg, as we call it, to divert a company, who at last go away complaining of their disagreeable entertainment." In consequence of these maxims, and full of indignation against such parents as delight to produce their young ones early into the talking world, I have known Mr. Johnson give a good deal of pain, by refusing to hear the verses the children could recite, or the songs they could sing; particularly one friend who told him that his two sons should repeat Gray's elegy to him alternately, that he might judge who had the happiest cadence. "No, pray Sir," said he, "let the dears both speak it at once; more noise will by that means be made, and the noise will be sooner over."

4. *Parson Ford.*

Mr. Johnson always spoke to me of his cousin, the Rev. Mr. Ford [1], with tenderness, praising his acquaintance with life and manners, and recollecting one piece of advice that no man surely ever followed more

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 45.]

exactly. "Obtain," says Ford, "some general principles of every science; he who can talk only on one subject, or act only in one department, is seldom wanted, and perhaps never wished for; while the man of general knowledge can often benefit, and always please." He used to relate, however, another story less to the credit of his cousin's penetration, how Ford on some occasion said to him, "You will make your way the more easily in the world, I see, as you are contented to dispute no man's claim to conversation excellence; they will, therefore, more willingly allow your pretensions as a writer."

5. *Johnson's Nurse. — Children's Books.*

Dr. Johnson first learned to read of his mother and her old maid Catharine, in whose lap he well remembered sitting while she explained to him the story of St. George and the Dragon. The recollection of such reading as had delighted him in his infancy, made him always persist in fancying that it was the only reading which could please an infant; and he used to condemn me for putting Newbery's books into their hands as too trifling to engage their attention. "Babies do not want," said he, "to hear about babies; they like to be told of giants and castles, and of somewhat which can stretch and stimulate their little minds." When in answer I would urge the numerous editions and quick sale of Tommy Prudent or Goody Two Shoes: "Remember always," said he, "that the parents *buy* the books, and that the children never read them." Mrs. Barbauld, however, had his best praise (1), and deserved it; no man was more struck than Mr. Johnson with voluntary descent from possible splendour to painful duty.

(1) This is not consistent with his opinion before recorded (*antè*, Vol. VI. p. 28.) of this lady's work for the instruction of youth. — C.

6. *Dreams and Ghosts.*

I have heard him relate an odd thing of himself, but it is one which every body has heard as well as I: now, when he was about nine years old, having got the play of Hamlet in his hand, and reading it quietly in his father's kitchen, he kept on steadily enough, till, coming to the ghost scene, he suddenly hurried up stairs to the street door that he might see people about him: such an incident, as he was not unwilling to relate it, is probably in every one's possession now; he told it as a testimony to the merits of Shakspeare: but one day when my son was going to school, and dear Dr. Johnson followed as far as the garden gate, praying for his salvation, in a voice which those who listened attentively could hear plain enough, he said to me suddenly, "Make your boy tell you his dreams: the first corruption that entered into my heart was communicated in a dream." "What was it, Sir?" said I. "Do not ask me" replied he with much violence, and walked away in apparent agitation.* I never durst make any further enquiries.

7. *Education of Children.*

Mr. Johnson was exceedingly disposed to the general indulgence of children, and was even scrupulously and ceremoniously attentive not to offend them: he had strongly persuaded himself of the difficulty people always find to erase early impressions either of kindness or resentment, and said, "he should never have so loved his mother when a man, had she not given him coffee she could ill afford, to gratify his appetite when a boy."

"If you had had children, Sir," said I, "would you have taught them any thing?" "I hope," replied he "that I should have willingly lived on bread and water to obtain instruction for them; but I would not have

set their future friendship to hazard, for the sake of thrusting into their heads knowledge of things for which they might not perhaps have either taste or necessity. You teach your daughters the diameters of the planets, and wonder when you have done that they do not delight in your company. No science can be communicated by mortal creatures without attention from the scholar; no attention can be obtained from children without the infliction of pain, and pain is never remembered without resentment." That something should be learned, was however so certainly his opinion, that I have heard him say, how education had been often compared to agriculture, yet that it resembled it chiefly in this: "that if nothing is sown, no crop," says he, "can be obtained." His contempt of the lady who fancied her son could be eminent without study, because Shakspeare was found wanting in scholastic learning, was expressed in terms so gross and so well known, I will not repeat them here.

The remembrance of what had passed in his own childhood, made Mr. Johnson very solicitous to preserve the felicity of children; and when he had persuaded Dr. Sumner to remit the tasks usually given to fill up boys' time during the holydays, he rejoiced exceedingly in the success of his negotiation, and told me that he had never ceased representing to all the eminent schoolmasters in England, the absurd tyranny of poisoning the hour of permitted pleasure, by keeping future misery before the children's eyes, and tempting them by bribery or falsehood to evade it. "Bob Sumner," said he, "however, I have at length prevailed upon: I know not indeed whether his tenderness was persuaded, or his reason convinced, but the effect will always be the same." Poor Dr. Sumner died, however, before the next vacation.

8. *Positive and General.*

Mr. Johnson was of opinion, too, that young people should have *positive* not *general* rules given for their direction. "My mother," said he, "was always telling me that I did not *behave* myself properly; that I should endeavour to learn *behaviour*, and such cant: but when I replied, that she ought to tell me what to do, and what to avoid, her admonitions were commonly, for that time at least, at an end." This, I fear, was, however, at best a momentary refuge, found out by perverseness. No man knew better than Johnson in how many nameless and numberless actions *behaviour* consists: actions which can scarcely be reduced to rule, and which come under no description. Of these he retained so many very strange ones, that I suppose no one who saw his odd manner of gesticulating, much blamed or wondered at the good lady's solicitude concerning her son's *behaviour*.

9. *Parental Authority.*

Though he was attentive to the peace of children in general, no man had a stronger contempt than he for such parents as openly profess that they cannot govern their children. "How," says he, "is an army governed? Such people, for the most part, multiply prohibitions till obedience becomes impossible, and authority appears absurd; and never suspect that they tease their family, their friends, and themselves, only because conversation runs low, and something must be said."

Of parental authority, indeed, few people thought with a lower degree of estimation. I one day mentioned the resignation of Cyrus to his father's will, as related by Xenophon, when, after all his conquests, he requested the consent of Cambyses to his marriage with a neighbouring princess; and I added Rollin's applause and recommendation of the example. "Do you not perceive, then," says Johnson, "that Xenophon on this

occasion commends like a pedant, and Père Rollin applauds like a slave? If Cyrus by his conquests had not purchased emancipation, he had conquered to little purpose indeed. Can you bear to see the folly of a fellow who has in his care the lives of thousands, when he begs his papa permission to be married, and confesses his inability to decide in a matter which concerns no man's happiness but his own?"

Mr. Johnson caught me another time reprimanding the daughter of my housekeeper for having sat down unpermitted in her mother's presence. "Why, she gets her living, does she not," said he, "without her mother's help? Let the wench alone," continued he. And when we were again out of the women's sight who were concerned in the dispute: "Poor people's children, dear lady," said he, "never respect them: I did not respect my own mother, though I loved her: and one day, when in anger she called me a puppy, I asked her if she knew what they called a puppy's mother?"

We were talking of a young fellow who used to come often to the house; he was about fifteen years old, or less, if I remember right, and had a manner at once sullen and sheepish. "That lad," says Mr. Johnson, "looks like the son of a schoolmaster; which," added he, "is one of the very worst conditions of childhood: such a boy has no father, or worse than none; he never can reflect on his parent, but the reflection brings to his mind some idea of pain inflicted, or of sorrow suffered."

10. *Cultivation of Memory.*

I will relate one thing more that Dr. Johnson said about babyhood before I quit the subject; it was this: "That little people should be encouraged always to tell whatever they hear particularly striking, to some brother, sister, or servant, immediately before the impression is erased by the intervention of newer occurrences. He perfectly remembered the first time he

ever heard of heaven and hell, he said, "because when his mother had made out such a description of both places as she thought likely to seize the attention of her infant auditor, who was then in bed with her, she got up, and dressing him before the usual time, sent him directly to call a favourite workman in the house, to whom she knew he would communicate the conversation while it was yet impressed upon his mind. The event was what she wished; and it was to that method chiefly that he owed his uncommon felicity of remembering distant occurrences, and long past conversations."

11. *Oxford*.

Dr. Johnson delighted in his own partiality for Oxford; and one day, at my house, entertained five members of the other university with various instances of the superiority of Oxford, enumerating the gigantic names of many men whom it had produced, with apparent triumph. At last I said to him, "Why there happens to be no less than five Cambridge men in the room now." "I did not," said he, "think of that till you told me; but the wolf don't count the sheep." When the company were retired, we happened to be talking of Dr. Barnard, the Provost of Eton, who died about that time; and after a long and just eulogium on his wit, his learning, and his goodness of heart: "He was the only man, too," says Mr. Johnson quite seriously, "that did justice to my good breeding; and you may observe that I am well bred to a degree of needless scrupulosity. No man," continued he, not observing the amazement of his hearers, "no man is so cautious not to interrupt another; no man thinks it so necessary to appear attentive when others are speaking; no man so steadily refuses preference to himself, or so willingly bestows it on another, as I do; nobody holds so strongly as I do the necessity of ceremony, and the ill effects

which follow the breach of it: yet people think me rude; but Barnard did me justice." "'T is pity," said I, laughing, "that he had not heard you compliment the Cambridge men after dinner to-day."

Sir William Browne the physician, who lived to a very extraordinary age (1), and was in other respects an odd mortal, with more genius than understanding, and more self-sufficiency than wit, was the only person who ventured to oppose Mr. Johnson, when he had a mind to shine by exalting his favourite university, and to express his contempt of the whiggish notions which prevail at Cambridge. *He* did it once, however, with surprising felicity: his antagonist having repeated with an air of triumph the famous epigram written by Dr. Trapp,

"Our royal master saw, with heedful eyes,
The wants of his two universities:
Troops he to Oxford sent, as knowing why
That learned body wanted loyalty:
But books to Cambridge gave, as, well discerning,
That that right loyal body wanted learning."

Which, says Sir William, might well be answered thus:—

"The king to Oxford sent his troop of horse,
For Tories own no argument but force;
With equal care to Cambridge books he sent,
For Whigs allow no force but argument."

Mr. Johnson did him the justice to say, it was one of the happiest extemporaneous productions he ever met with; though he once comically confessed, that he hated to repeat the wit of a Whig urged in support of whiggism.

(1) He died in March, 1774, at the age of eighty-two. It is no where stated, that I know of, that this epigram was made extemporaneously on a provocation from Dr. Johnson. See an account of Sir William Browne, and a more accurate version of the two epigrams, in the Biog. Dict. — C.

12. *Toryism and Garrick.*

Of Mr. Johnson's toryism the world has long been witness, and the political pamphlets written by him in defence of his party are vigorous and elegant. Says Garrick to him one day, "Why did not you make me a Tory, when we lived so much together; you love to make people Tories?" "Why," says Johnson, pulling a heap of halfpence from his pocket, "did not the king make these guineas?"

13. *Burke.—Boswell.*

It was in the year 1775 that Mr. Edmund Burke made the famous speech in parliament (1), that struck even foes with admiration, and friends with delight. Among the nameless thousands who are contented to echo those praises they have not skill to invent, *I* ventured, before Dr. Johnson himself, to applaud, with rapture, the beautiful passage in it concerning Lord Bathurst and the angel (2); which, said our Doctor,

(1) On the 22d of March, 1775, upon moving his resolutions for conciliation with America.

(2) ["Mr. Speaker, I cannot prevail on myself to hurry over this great consideration. It is good for us to be here. We stand where we have an immense view of what is, and what is past. Clouds indeed, and darkness, rest upon the future. Let us, however, before we descend from this noble eminence, reflect that this growth of our national prosperity has happened within the short period of the life of man. It has happened within sixty-eight years. There are those alive whose memory might touch the two extremities. For instance, my Lord Bathurst might remember all the stages of the progress. He was in 1704 of an age at least to be made to comprehend such things. He was then old enough *acta parentum jam legere, et quæ sit poterit cognoscere virtus.*—Suppose, Sir, that the angel of this auspicious youth, foreseeing the many virtues, which made him one of the most amiable, as he is one of the most fortunate, men of his age, had opened to him in vision, that, when, in the fourth generation, the third prince of the House of Brunswick had sat twelve years on the throne of that nation, which (by the happy issue of moderate and healing councils) was to be made Great Britain, he should see his son, Lord Chancellor of England, turn back the current of hereditary

nad I been in the house, I would have answered thus: —

"Suppose, Mr. Speaker, that to Wharton, or to Marlborough, or to any of the eminent Whigs of the last age, the devil had, not with any great impropriety, consented to appear; he would perhaps in somewhat like these words have commenced the conversation:

"'You seem, my Lord, to be concerned at the judicious apprehension, that while you are sapping the foundations of royalty at home, and propagating here the dangerous doctrine of resistance; the distance of America may secure its inhabitants from your arts, though active: but I will unfold to you the gay prospects of futurity. This people, now so innocent and harmless, shall draw the sword against their mother country, and bathe its point in the blood of their benefactors: this people, now contented with a little, shall then refuse to spare what they themselves confess they could not miss;

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dignity to its fountain, and raise him to a higher rank of peerage, whilst he enriched the family with a new one — If, amidst these bright and happy scenes of domestic honour and prosperity, that angel should have drawn up the curtain, and unfolded the rising glories of his country, and whilst he was gazing with admiration on the then commercial grandeur of England, the genius should point out to him a little speck, scarce visible in the mass of the national interest, a small seminal principle, rather than a formed body, and should tell him, — 'Young man, there is America — which at this day serves for little more than to amuse you with stories of savage men and uncouth manners; yet shall, before you taste of death, show itself equal to the whole of that commerce which now attracts the envy of the world. Whatever England has been growing to by a progressive increase of improvement, brought in by varieties of people, by succession of civilising conquests and civilising settlements in a series of seventeen hundred years, you shall see as much added to her by America in the course of a single life!' — if this state of his country had been foretold to him, would it not require all the sanguine credulity of youth, and all the fervid glow of enthusiasm, to make him believe it? Fortunate man, he has lived to see it! Fortunate, indeed, if he lives to see nothing that shall vary the prospect, and cloud the setting of his day!" *Parl. Hist.* vol. xviii. p. 487.]

and these men, now so honest and so grateful, shall, in return for peace and for protection, see their vile agents in the house of parliament, there to sow the seeds of sedition, and propagate confusion, perplexity, and pain. Be not dispirited, then, at the contemplation of their present happy state: I promise you that anarchy, poverty, and death shall, by my care, be carried even across the spacious Atlantic, and settle in America itself, the sure consequences of our beloved whiggism.'"

This I thought a thing so very particular, that I begged his leave to write it down directly, before any thing could intervene that might make me forget the force of the expressions: a trick, which I have however seen played on common occasions, of sitting steadily down at the other end of the room to write at the moment what should be said in company, either *by* Dr. Johnson or *to* him, I never practised myself, nor approved of in another. (1) There is something so ill-bred, and so inclining to treachery in this conduct, that were it commonly adopted, all confidence would soon be exiled from society, and a conversation assembly-room would become tremendous as a court of justice. A set of acquaintance joined in familiar chat may say a thousand things, which, as the phrase is, pass well enough at the time, though they cannot stand the test of critical examination; and as all talk beyond that which is necessary to the purposes of actual business is a kind of game, there will be ever found ways of playing fairly or unfairly at it, which distinguish the gentleman from the juggler.

14. *Anacreon's Dove.*

Dr. Johnson, as well as many of my acquaintance, knew that I kept a commonplace book; and he one day said to me good-humouredly, that he would give me something to write in my repository. "I warrant,"

(1) [This is evidently an allusion to Boswell.]

said he, "there is a great deal about me in it: you shall have at least one thing worth your pains; so if you will get the pen and ink, I will repeat to you Anacreon's Dove directly; but tell at the same time, that as I never was struck with any thing in the Greek language till I read *that*, so I never read any thing in the same language since, that pleased me as much. I hope my translation," continued he, "is not worse than that of Frank Fawkes." Seeing me disposed to laugh. "Nay, nay," said he, "Frank Fawkes has done them very finely: —

Lovely courier of the sky,
Whence and whither dost thou fly?
Scatt'ring, as thy pinions play,
Liquid fragrance all the way
Is it business? is it love?
Tell me, tell me, gentle Dove.

"Soft Anacreon's vows I bear,
Vows to Myrtale the fair;
Graced with all that charms the heart,
Blushing nature, smiling art,
Venus, courted by an ode,
On the bard her Dove bestow'd.
Vested with a master's right
Now Anacreon rules my flight:
His the letters that you see,
Weighty charge consign'd to me:
Think not yet my service hard,
Joyless task without reward:
Smiling at my master's gates,
Freedom my return awaits;
But the liberal grant in vain
Tempts me to be wild again:
Can a prudent Dove decline
Blissful bondage such as mine?
Over hills and fields to roam,
Fortune's guest without a home;
Under leaves to hide one's head,
Slightly shelter'd, coarsely fed,

Now my better lot bestows
Sweet repast, and soft repose;
Now the generous bowl I sip
As it leaves Anacreon's lip;
Void of care, and free from dread,
From his fingers snatch his bread,
Then with luscious plenty gay,
Round his chamber dance and play;
Or from wine as courage springs,
O'er his face extend my wings;
And when feast and frolic tire,
Drop asleep upon his lyre.
This is all, be quick and go,
More than all thou canst not know;
Let me now my pinions ply,
I have chatter'd like a pie."

When I had finished, "But you must remember to add," says Mr. Johnson, "that though these verses were planned, and even begun, when I was sixteen years old, I never could find time to make an end of them before I was sixty-eight."

15. *Johnson's Portrait by Himself.*

He told me that the character of *Sober*, in the Idler, was by himself intended as his own portrait; and that he had his own outset into life in his eye, when he wrote the eastern story of Gelaleddin.

16. *Giving away Literary Productions.*

Dr. Johnson was liberal enough in granting literary assistance to others, I think; and innumerable are the prefaces, sermons, lectures, and dedications which he used to make for people who begged of him. Mr. Murphy related in his and my hearing one day, and he did not deny it, that when Murphy joked him the week before for having been so diligent of late between Dodd's sermon and Kelly's prologue, that Dr. Johnson replied, "Why, Sir, when they come to me with a

dead stay-maker and a dying parson, what can a man do?" He said, however, that "he hated to give away literary performances, or even to sell them too cheaply: the next generation shall not accuse me," added he, "of beating down the price of literature: one hates, besides, ever to give that which one has been accustomed to sell: would not you, Sir," turning to Mr. Thrale, "rather give away money than porter?"

17. *Reading.*

Mr. Johnson had never, by his own account, been a close student, and used to advise young people never to be without a book in their pocket, to be read at bye-times, when they had nothing else to do. "It has been by that means," said he to a boy at our house one day, "that all my knowledge has been gained, except what I have picked up by running about the world with my wits ready to observe, and my tongue ready to talk. A man is seldom in a humour to unlock his bookcase, set his desk in order, and betake himself to serious study; but a retentive memory will do something, and a fellow shall have strange credit given him, if he can but recollect striking passages from different books, keep the authors separate in his head, and bring his stock of knowledge artfully into play. How else," added he, "do the gamesters manage, when they play for more money than they are worth?"

18. *The Dictionary.*

His Dictionary, however, could not, one would think, have been written by running up and down: but he really did not consider it as a great performance; and used to say, "that he might have done it easily in two years, had not his health received several shocks during the time." When Mr. Thrale, in consequence of this declaration, teased him, in the year 1768, to give a new edition of it, "because," said he "there are four or five

gross faults:"—"Alas! Sir," replied Johnson, "there are four or five hundred faults, instead of four or five; but you do not consider that it would take me up three whole months' labour, and when the time was expired the work would not be done." When the booksellers set him about it, however, some years after, he went cheerfully to the business, said he was well paid, and that they deserved to have it done carefully.

19. *The French Academy.*

His reply to the person who complimented him on his Dictionary coming out first, mentioning the ill success of the French in a similar attempt, is well known; and, I trust, has been often recorded: "Why, what would you expect, dear Sir," said he, "from fellows that eat frogs?" (1)

20. *Greek.*

I have often thought Dr. Johnson more free than prudent, in professing so loudly his little skill in the Greek language (2): for though he considered it as a proof of a narrow mind to be too careful of literary reputation, yet no man could be more enraged than he, if an enemy, taking advantage of this confession, twitted him with his ignorance; and I remember when the king of Denmark was in England, one of his noblemen was brought by Mr. Colman to see Dr. Johnson at our country-house; and having heard, he said, that he was not famous for Greek literature, attacked him on the weak side; politely adding, that he chose that conversation on purpose to favour himself. Our Doctor, however, displayed so copious, so compendious a knowledge of authors, books, and every branch of learning in that language, that the gentleman appeared astonished.

(1) For his pleasantry about the French Academy, see Vol. I. p. 215. — C.

(2) [See *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 389.]

When he was gone home, says Johnson, "Now for all this triumph, I may thank Thrale's Xenophon here, as, I think excepting that one, I have not looked in a Greek book these ten years: but see what haste my dear friends were all in," continued he, "to tell this poor innocent foreigner that I knew nothing of Greek! Oh, no, he knows nothing of Greek!" with a loud burst of laughing.

21. *Pope — Dryden — Garrick — Congreve — and Young.*

Of Pope as a writer he had the highest opinion, and once when a lady at our house talked of his preface to Shakspeare as superior to Pope's, "I fear not, Madam," said he; "the little fellow has done wonders." His superior reverence of Dryden, notwithstanding, still appeared in his talk as in his writings; and when some one mentioned the ridicule thrown on him in the "Rehearsal," as having hurt his general character as an author, "on the contrary," says Mr. Johnson, "the greatness of Dryden's reputation is now the only principle of vitality which keeps the duke of Buckingham's play from putrefaction." (1)

It was not very easy, however, for people not quite intimate with Dr. Johnson, to get exactly his opinion of a writer's merit, as he would now and then divert himself by confounding those who thought themselves obliged to say to-morrow what he had said yesterday; and even Garrick, who ought to have been better acquainted with his tricks, professed himself mortified, that one time when he was extolling Dryden in a rapture that I suppose disgusted his friend, Mr. Johnson suddenly challenged him to produce twenty lines in a

(1) [If this opinion on the republication of "The Rehearsal" be correct, it must — as sometimes happens — have fallen and risen again. The truth is, that the greater number of readers at present admire the wit of "The Rehearsal," without ever thinking of its being a satire on Dryden. — FONNEREAU.]

series, that would not disgrace the poet and his admirer Garrick produced a passage that he had once heard the Doctor commend, in which he *now* found, if I remember rightly, sixteen faults, and made Garrick look silly at his own table. When I told Mr. Johnson the story, Why, what a monkey was David now," says he, "to tell of his own disgrace!"

In the course of that hour's chat, he told me how he used to tease Garrick by commendations of the tomb scene in Congreve's Mourning Bride, protesting that Shakspeare had, in the same line of excellence, nothing as good: "All which is strictly *true*," said he; but that is no reason for supposing Congreve is to stand in competition with Shakspeare: these fellows know not how to blame, nor how to commend."

I forced him one day, in a similar humour, to prefer Young's description of night to the so much admired ones of Dryden and Shakspeare, as more forcible, and more general. Every reader is not either a lover or a tyrant, but every reader is interested when he hears that

> "Creation sleeps; 't is as the general pulse
> Of life stood still, and nature made a pause;
> An awful pause—prophetic of its end."

"This," said he, "is true; but remember that, taking the compositions of Young in general, they are but like bright stepping-stones over a miry road. Young froths, and foams, and bubbles sometimes very vigorously; but we must not compare the noise made by your tea-kettle here with the roaring of the ocean."

22. *Corneille.—Shakespeare.—Steele.*

Somebody was praising Corneille one day in opposition to Shakspeare: "Corneille is to Shakspeare," replied Mr. Johnson, "as a clipped hedge is to a forest." When we talked of Steele's Essays, "They are too thin," says our critic, "for an Englishman's taste:

mere superficial observations on life and manners, without erudition enough to make them keep, — like the light French wines, which turn sour with standing a while for want of *body*, as we call it."

23. *Style of Swift.*

A friend was praising the style of Dr. Swift; Mr. Johnson did not find himself in the humour to agree with him: the critic was driven from one of his performances to the other. At length, "you *must* allow me," said the gentleman, "that there are *strong facts* in the account of the 'Four last Years of Queen Anne.'" "Yes, surely, Sir," replies Johnson, "and so there are in the Ordinary of Newgate's account."

24. "*New Manner of Writing.*"

This was like the story which Mr. Murphy tells, and Johnson always acknowledged: how Dr. Rose of Chiswick, contending for the preference of Scotch writers over the English, after having set up his authors like nine-pins, while the Doctor kept bowling them down again; at last, to make sure of victory, he named Ferguson upon "Civil Society," and praised the book for being written in a *new* manner. "I do not," says Johnson, "perceive the value of this new manner; it is only like Buckinger, who had no hands, and so wrote with his feet."

25. *Robertson.—Canting.*

When he related to me a short dialogue that passed between himself and a writer of the first eminence in the world, when he was in Scotland, I was shocked to think how he must have disgusted him. Dr. Robertson asked me, said he, why I did not join in their public worship when among them? "for," said he, 'I went to your churches often when in England. "So," replied Johnson, "I have read that the Siamese sent ambassadors to Louis Quatorze, but I never heard that the

king of France thought it worth his while to send ambassadors from his court to that of Siam."

He was no gentler with myself, or those for whom I had the greatest regard. When I one day lamented the loss of a first cousin killed in America; "Prithee, my dear" said he, "have done with canting how would the world be worse for it, I may ask, if all your relations were at once spitted like larks, and roasted for Presto's supper?" Presto was the dog that lay under the table while we talked.

26. *Young Peas*

When we went into Wales together, and spent some time at Sir Robert Cotton's at Lleweny, one day at dinner I meant to please Mr. Johnson particularly with dish of very young peas. "Are not they charming?" said I to him, while he was eating them.—"Perhaps," said he, "they would be so — to a *pig*."

27. *Warton's Poems.*

When a well known author published his poems in the year 1777: such a one's verses are come out, said I. "Yes," replied Johnson, "and this frost has struck them in again. Here are some lines I have written to ridicule them: but remember that I love the fellow dearly, now—for all I laugh at him:

> "Wheresoe'er I turn my view,
> All is strange, yet nothing new:
> Endless labour all along,
> Endless labour to be wrong;
> Phrase that time has flung away;
> Uncouth words in disarray,
> Trick'd in antique ruff and bonnet,
> Ode, and elegy, and sonnet." (1)

(1) The metre of these lines was no doubt suggested by Warton's "Crusade" and "The Grave of King Arthur, (*Works*, vol. ii. pp. 38. 51.); but they are, otherwise, rather a criticism than a parody. — C.

28. *Potter's Euripides.*

When he parodied the verses of another eminent writer (1), it was done with more provocation, I believe, and with some merry malice. A serious translation of the same lines, which I think are from Euripides, may be found in "Burney's History of Music." Here are the burlesque ones: —

"Err shall they not, who resolute explore
Times gloomy backward with judicious eyes;
And scanning right the practices of yore,
Shall deem our hoar progenitors unwise.

"They to the dome where smoke with curling play
Announced the dinner to the regions round,
Summon'd the singer blithe, and harper gay,
And aided wine with dulcet-streaming sound.

"The better use of notes, or sweet or shrill,
By quiv'ring string, or modulated wind;
Trumpet or lyre — to their harsh bosoms chill,
Admission ne'er had sought, or could not find.

"Oh! send them to the sullen mansion's dun,
Her baleful eyes where Sorrow rolls around;
Where gloom-enamoured Mischief loves to dwell,
And Murder all blood-bolter'd, schemes the wound.

"When cates luxuriant pile the spacious dish
And purple nectar glads the festive hour;
The guest, without a want, without a wish,
Can yield no room to Music's soothing pow'r."

29. *Legendary Stories.—Bishop Percy.*

Some of the old legendary stories put in verse by

(1) Malone's MS. notes, communicated by Mr. Markland, state that this was "Robert Potter, the translator of Æschylus and Euripides, who wrote a pamphlet against Johnson, in consequence of his criticism on Gray." It may, therefore, be presumed that these verses were made subsequently to that publication, in 1783. Potter died, a prebendary of Norwich, in 1804, æt. eighty-three. — C.

modern writers (1), provoked him to caricature them thus one day at Streatham; but they are already well known, I am sure.

> "The tender infant, meek and mild,
> Fell down upon the stone;
> The nurse took up the squealing child,
> But still the child squeal'd on."

A famous ballad also, beginning, "Rio verde, Rio verde," when I commended the translation of it (2), he said he could do it better himself — as thus:

> "Glassy water, glassy water,
> Down whose current, clear and strong,
> Chiefs confused in mutual slaughter,
> Moor and Christian, roll along."

But, Sir, said I, this is not ridiculous at all. "Why, no," replied he, "why should I always write ridiculously? perhaps, because I made these verses to imitate such a one, naming him: —

> "Hermit hoar, in solemn cell,
> Wearing out life's evening gray;
> Strike thy bosom, sage! and tell,
> What is bliss, and which the way?
>
> "Thus I spoke, and speaking sigh'd,—
> Scarce repress'd the starting tear,—
> When the hoary Sage replied,
> Come, my lad, and drink some beer." (3)

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(1) This alludes to Bishop Percy and his "Hermit of Warkworth." — C.

(2) No doubt the translation by Bishop Percy: —

> "Gentle river, gentle river,
> Lo, thy streams are stain'd with gore;
> Many a brave and noble captain
> Floats along thy willow'd shore."

Neither of these pretended translations give any idea of the peculiar simplicity of the original. — C.

(3) [See *antè*, Vol. VI. p. 299.]

30. *Caricatura Imitation.—Fat Oxen, &c.*

I could give another comical instance of caricatura imitation. Recollecting some day, when praising these verses of Lopez de Vega,

> ' Se aquien los leones vence
> Vence una muger hermosa
> O el de flaco averguençe
> O ella di ser mas furiosa,"

more than he thought they deserved, Mr. Johnson instantly observed, " that they were founded on a trivial conceit; and that conceit ill-explained, and ill-expressed beside. The lady, we all know, does not conquer in the same manner as the lion does: 't is a mere play of words," added he, " and you might as well say, that

> If the man who turnips cries,
> Cry not when his father dies,
> 'T is a proof that he had rather
> Have a turnip than his father."

And this humour is of the same sort with which he answered the friend who commended the following line:

> Who rules o'er freemen should himself be free.

" To be sure," said Dr. Johnson,

> " Who drives fat oxen should himself be fat."

This readiness of finding a parallel, or making one, was shown by him perpetually in the course of conversation. When the French verses of a certain pantomime were quoted thus,

> " Je suis Cassandre descendue des cieux,
> Pour vous faire entendre, mesdames et messieurs,
> Que je suis Cassandre descendue des cieux;"

he cried out gaily and suddenly, almost in a moment,

> " I am Cassandra come down from the sky,
> To tell each by-stander what none can deny,
> That I am Cassandra come down from the sky."

The pretty Italian verses, too, at the end of Baretti's book, called "Easy Phraseology," he did *all' improvviso* in the same manner:—

"Viva! viva la padrona!
Tutta bella, e tutta buona,
La padrona è un angiolella
Tutta buona e tutta bella,
Tutta bella e tutta buona,
Viva! viva la padrona!"

"Long may live my lovely Hetty!
Always young and always pretty,
Always pretty, always young,
Live my lovely Hetty long!
Always young and always pretty,
Long may live my lovely Hetty!"

The famous distich, too, of an Italian *improvvisatore*, who, when the Duke of Modena ran away from the comet in the year 1742 or 1743,

"Se al venir vestro i principi sen' vanno,
Deh venga ogni dì — durate un anno,

"which," said he, "would do just as well in our language thus:—

If at your coming princes disappear,
Comets! come every day—and stay a year."

When some one in company commended the verses of M. de Benserade *à son Lit;*

"Théâtre des ris et des pleurs,
Lit! où je nais, et où je meurs,
Tu nous fais voir comment voisins
Sont nos plaisirs, et nos chagrins,"

he replied without hesitating,

"In bed we laugh, in bed we cry,
And born in bed, in bed we die;
The near approach a bed may show
Of human bliss to human woe."

31. *Lord Anson.* — *Wits.*

The epigram written at Lord Anson's house many years ago, "where," says Mr. Johnson, "I was well received and kindly treated, and with the true gratitude of a wit ridiculed the master of the house before I had left it an hour," has been falsely printed in many papers since his death. I wrote it down from his own lips one evening in August, 1772, not neglecting the little preface, accusing himself of making so graceless a return for the civilities shown him. He had, among other elegancies about the park and gardens, been made to observe a temple to the winds, when this thought naturally presented itself *to a wit.*

> "Gratum animum laudo; Qui debuit omnia ventis,
> Quam bene ventorum, surgere templa jubet!"

32. *Dr. Lawrence.*

Poor Dr. Lawrence had long been his friend and confident. The conversation I saw them hold together in Essex Street one day in the year 1781 or 1782 was a melancholy one, and made a singular impression on my mind. He was himself exceedingly ill, and I accompanied him thither for advice. The physician was however, in some respects, more to be pitied than the patient. Johnson was panting under an asthma and dropsy; but Lawrence had been brought home that very morning struck with the palsy, from which he had, two hours before we came, strove to awaken himself by blisters: they were both deaf, and scarce able to speak besides; one from difficulty of breathing, the other from paralytic debility. To give and receive medical counsel, therefore, they fairly sat down on each side a table in the doctor's gloomy apartment, adorned with skeletons, preserved monsters, &c. and agreed to

write Latin billets to each other. Such a scene did I never see! "You," said Johnson, "are *timidè* and *gelidè*;" finding that his friend had prescribed palliative, not drastic remedies. "It is not *me*," replies poor Lawrence in an interrupted voice; "'tis nature that is *gelidè* and *timidè*." In fact, he lived but few months after, I believe, and retained his faculties a still shorter time. He was a man of strict piety and profound learning, but little skilled in the knowledge of life or manners, and died without having ever enjoyed the reputation he so justly deserved.

33. *Arithmetic.—National Debt.*

When Mr. Johnson felt his fancy, or fancied he felt it, disordered, his constant recurrence was to the study of arithmetic; and one day that he was totally confined to his chamber, and I enquired what he had been doing to divert himself, he showed me a calculation which I could scarce be made to understand, so vast was the plan of it, and so very intricate were the figures: no other indeed than that the national debt, computing it at one hundred and eighty millions sterling, would, if converted into silver, serve to make a meridian of that metal, I forget how broad, for the globe of the whole earth, the real *globe*.

34. *Number and Numeration.*

On a similar occasion, I asked him (knowing what subject he would like best to talk upon), how his opinion stood towards the question between Pascal and Soame Jenyns about number and numeration? as the French philosopher observes that infinity, though on all sides astonishing, appears most so when the idea is connected with the idea of number; for the notions of infinite number, and infinite number we know there is,

stretches one's capacity still more than the idea of infinite space: "Such a notion, indeed," adds he, "can scarcely find room in the human mind." Our English author, on the other hand, exclaims, Let no man give himself leave to talk about infinite number, for infinite number is a contradiction in terms; whatever is once numbered, we all see cannot be infinite. "I think," said Mr. Johnson, after a pause, "we must settle the matter thus: numeration is certainly infinite, for eternity might be employed in adding unit to unit; but every number is in itself finite, as the possibility of doubling it easily proves: besides, stop at what point you will, you find yourself as far from infinitude as ever."

35. *Historical Fact.—General Polity.*

As ethics or figures, or metaphysical reasoning, was the sort of talk he most delighted in, so no kind of conversation pleased him less, I think, than when the subject was historical fact or general polity. "What shall we learn from *that* stuff?" said he: "let us not fancy, like Swift, that we are exalting a woman's character by telling how she

> Could name the ancient heroes round,
> Explain for what they were renown'd," &c.

I must not, however, lead my readers to suppose that he meant to reserve such talk for *men's* company as a proof of pre-eminence. "He never," as he expressed it, "desired to hear of the *Punic war* while he lived: such conversation was lost time," he said, "and carried one away from common life, leaving no ideas behind which could serve *living wight* as warning or direction.

> How I should act is not the case,
> But how would Brutus in my place?

And now," cries Mr. Johnson, laughing with obstreperous violence, "if these two foolish lines can be

equalled in folly, except by the two succeeding ones, show them me." (1) *

36. *Catiline and Tom Thumb.*

I asked him once concerning the conversation powers of a gentleman (2) with whom I was myself unacquainted: — "He talked to me at club one day," replies our Doctor, "concerning Catiline's conspiracy — so I withdrew my attention, and thought about Tom Thumb."

(1) These are two lines of Swift's *Verses to Stella*, 1720. Dr. Johnson's censure was too violent, and indeed he seems not to have correctly understood the dean's illustration. He is laying down certain general rules for distinguishing what *honour* is, and he exposes the many false meanings which the world assigns to that word. He proceeds to say that men should not decide what is *honourable* by a reference to *their own* feelings and circumstances, which naturally bias the judgment, but should consider, without reference to self, how a wise and good man would act.

> * In points of honour to be tried,
> All passion must be laid aside,
> Ask no advice, but think alone;
> Suppose the question not your own.
> 'How shall I act?' is not the case,
> But how would *Brutus* in my place?
> In such a case would *Cato* bleed?
> And how would *Socrates* proceed?

[illegible] plain here, and still plainer from the whole context of the poem, that *Brutus*, *Cato*, and *Socrates* are here put as the representatives of Patriotism and Virtue, and as the names of *Zoilus*, *Bavius*, or *Pandarus* are used generically to signify *infamous persons*, so here, *Brutus*, *Cato*, and *Socrates* (which might as well have been *Sidney*, *Somers*, or *Clarendon*, or any other illustrious names,) are used as terms of honour to give point and a kind of dramatic effect to the general proposition. Swift never dreamt (as Mrs. Piozzi's report would lead us to think that Johnson supposed) to advise that *our* rules of conduct were to be drawn from the actual events of Greek and Roman history. This would have been as absurd as Johnson's own introduction of Roman manners into *London* in his description of the burning of Orgilio's palace, or the invocation of Democritus, which sounds so strangely amidst the modern illustrations of his own beautiful and splendid *Vanity of Human Wishes*. — C.

(2) [Mr. Agmondesham Vesey. See *antè*, Vol. VII. p. 275.]

37. *Modern Politics.*

Modern politics fared no better. I was one time extolling the character of a statesman, and expatiating on the skill required to direct the different currents, reconcile the jarring interests, &c. : — "Thus," replies he, "a mill is a complicated piece of mechanism enough, but the water is no part of the workmanship."

On another occasion, when some one lamented the weakness of a then present minister, and complained that he was dull and tardy, and knew little of affairs, — "You may as well complain, Sir," says Johnson, "that the accounts of time are kept by the clock ; for he certainly does stand still upon the stair-head — and we all know that he is no great chronologer."

38. *French Invasion.*

In the year 1777, or thereabouts, when all the talk was of an invasion, he said most pathetically one afternoon, "Alas ! alas ! how this unmeaning stuff spoils all my comfort in my friends' conversation ! Will the people never have done with it ; and shall I never hear a sentence again without the *French* in it ? Here is no invasion coming, and you *know* there is none. Let the vexatious and frivolous talk alone, or suffer it at least to teach you *one* truth ; and learn by this perpetual echo of even unapprehended distress, how historians magnify events expected, or calamities endured ; when you know they are at this very moment collecting all the big words they can find, in which to describe a consternation never felt, for a misfortune which never happened. Among all your lamentations, who eats the less ? Who sleeps the worse, for one general's ill success, or another's capitulation ? Oh, pray let us hear no more of it !"

39. *A good Hater. — Whigs and Americans.*

No man was more zealously attached to his party ;

he not only loved a Tory himself, but he loved a man the better if he heard he hated a Whig. "Dear Bathurst," said he to me one day, "was a man to my very heart's content: he hated a fool, and he hated a rogue, and he hated a *Whig*; he was a very *good hater*." Some one mentioned a gentleman of that party for having behaved oddly on an occasion where faction was not concerned:—"Is he not a citizen of London, a native of North America, and a Whig?" says Johnson. "Let him be absurd, I beg of you: when a monkey is *too* like a man, it shocks one."

40. *Treatment of the Poor.*

Severity towards the poor was, in Dr. Johnson's opinion, an undoubted and constant attendant or consequence upon Whiggism; and he was not contented with giving them relief, he wished to add also indulgence. He loved the poor as I never yet saw any one else do, with an earnest desire to make them happy. What signifies, says some one, giving halfpence to common beggars? they only lay it out in gin or tobacco. "And why should they be denied such sweeteners of their existence?" says Johnson; "It is surely very savage to refuse them every possible avenue to pleasure, reckoned too coarse for our own acceptance. Life is a pill which none of us can bear to swallow without gilding; yet for the poor we delight in stripping it still barer, and are not ashamed to show even visible displeasure, if ever the bitter taste is taken from their mouths."

41. *Johnson's Pensioners.*

In consequence of these principles he nursed whole nests of people in his house, where the lame, the blind, the sick, and the sorrowful found a sure retreat from all the evils whence his little income could secure them; and, commonly spending the

middle of the week at our house, he kept his numerous family in Fleet Street upon a settled allowance; but returned to them every Saturday, to give them three good dinners, and his company, before he came back to us on the Monday night — treating them with the same, or perhaps more ceremonious civility, than he would have done by as many people of fashion — making the Holy Scriptures thus the rule of his conduct, and only expecting salvation as he was able to obey its precepts.

42. *Sentimental Miseries. — Distresses of Friends.*

While Dr. Johnson possessed, however, the strongest compassion for poverty or illness, he did not even pretend to feel for those who lamented the loss of a child, a parent, or a friend. "These are the distresses of sentiment," he would reply, "which a man who is really to be pitied has no leisure to feel. The sight of people who want food and raiment is so common in great cities, that a surly fellow like me has no compassion to spare for wounds given only to vanity or softness." No man, therefore, who smarted from the ingratitude of his friends found any sympathy from our philosopher. "Let him do good on higher motives next time," would be the answer; "he will then be sure of his reward." It is easy to observe, that the justice of such sentences made them offensive; but we must be careful how we condemn a man for saying what we know to be true, only because it *is* so.

Few things which pass well enough with others would do with him: he had been a great reader of Mandeville, and was ever on the watch to spy out those stains of original corruption, so easily discovered by a penetrating observer, even in the purest minds. I mentioned an event, which if it had happened would greatly have injured Mr. Thrale and his family — and then, dear Sir, said I, how sorry you would have been! "I hope," replied he, after a long pause, "I should have

been *very* sorry; — but remember Rochefoucault's maxim." (1) I would rather, answered I, remember Prior's verses, and ask,

> "What need of books these truths to tell,
> Which folks perceive that cannot spell?
> And must we spectacles apply,
> To see what hurts our naked eye?"—

Will *any* body's mind bear this eternal microscope that you place upon your own so? "I never," replied he, "saw one that *would*, except that of my dear Miss Reynolds — and hers is very near to purity itself."

Of slighter evils, and friends less distant than our own household, he spoke less cautiously. An acquaintance lost the almost certain hope of a good estate that had been long expected. Such a one will grieve, said I, at her friend's disappointment. "She will suffer as much, perhaps," said he, "as your horse did when your cow miscarried."

I professed myself sincerely grieved when accumulated distresses crushed Sir George Colebrook's family; and I was so. "Your own prosperity," said he, "may possibly have so far increased the natural tenderness of your heart, that for aught I know you *may* be *a little sorry*; but it is sufficient for a plain man if he does not laugh when he sees a fine new house tumble down all on a sudden, and a snug cottage stand by ready to receive the owner, whose birth entitled him to nothing better, and whose limbs are left him to go to work again with."

43. *Hyperbole.*

I used to tell him in jest, that his morality was easily contented; and when I have said something as if the

(1) ["In the misfortunes of our best friends we always find something to please us."]

wickedness of the world gave me concern, he would cry out aloud against canting, and protest that he thought there was very little gross wickedness in the world, and still less of extraordinary virtue. Nothing indeed more surely disgusted Dr. Johnson than hyperbole: he loved not to be told of sallies of excellence, which he said were seldom valuable, and seldom true. "Heroic virtues," said he, "are the *bons mots* of life; they do not appear often, and when they do appear are too much prized, I think; like the aloe-tree, which shoots and flowers once in a hundred years."

44. *Life made up of little Things.*

Life is made up of little things; and that character is the best which does little but repeated acts of beneficence; as that conversation is the best which consists in elegant and pleasing thoughts, expressed in natural and pleasing terms. "With regard to my own notions of moral virtue," continued he, "I hope I have not lost my sensibility of wrong: but I hope likewise that I have lived long enough in the world, to prevent me from expecting to find any action of which both the original motive and all the parts were good."

45. *Johnson's Piety and Spirit of Devotion.*

The piety of Dr. Johnson was exemplary and edifying. He was punctiliously exact to perform every public duty enjoined by the church, and his spirit of devotion had an energy that affected all who ever saw him pray in private. The coldest and most languid hearers of the word must have felt themselves animated by his manner of reading the Holy Scriptures; and to pray by his sick bed required strength of body as well as of mind, so vehement were his manners. I have many times made it my request to Heaven that I might be spared the sight of his death ond I was spared it!

46. *Voluntary Penance.*

Mr. Johnson, though in general a gross feeder, kept fast in Lent, particularly the holy week, with a rigour very dangerous to his general health; but though he had left off wine, (for religious motives as I always believed, though he did not own it,) yet he did not hold the commutation of offences by voluntary penance, or encourage others to practise severity upon themselves. He even once said, "that he thought it an error to endeavour at pleasing God by taking the rod of reproof out of his hands."

47. *Convents.— The Benedictines.*

When we talked of convents, and the hardships suffered in them — "Remember always," said he, "that a convent is an idle place, and where there is nothing to be *done* something must be *endured*: mustard has a bad taste *per se*, you may observe, but very insipid food cannot be eaten without it." His respect, however, for places of religious retirement was carried to the greatest degree of veneration. The Benedictine convent at Paris(1) paid him all possible honours in return, and the Prior (2) and he parted with tears of tenderness. Two of that

(1) We learn from the Abbé Mann's Account of the Benedictine Monks in Paris, that this priory was first founded at St. Malo, in 1611, by Giffard, Archbishop of Rheims. The French king not permitting this house to continue at St. Malo, on account of its proximity to England, Archbishop Giffard procured another at Paris, which, in 1642, was changed for one in the Rue St. Jacques, where the monks remained till 1793, when they were involved in the common destruction of the French Revolution. During their existence in Paris, these monks enjoyed all the privileges of the university, with regard to studies, degrees, and benefices annexed to the degrees; and it was by means of these last, that the house enjoyed considerable revenues. — MARKLAND.

(2) This individual was the Rev. Mr. Cowley. He was at this time about 40 years of age, and he is described to me by a still surviving contemporary (the Rev. A. Hyding, now residing at Ampleforth, near York), as a man of good sense, taste, and judgment. — MARKLAND.

college (1) being sent to England on [illegible] years after, spent much of their time with him a Bolt Court I know, and he was ever earnest to retain their friendship; but, though beloved by all his Roman Catholic acquaintance, particularly Dr. Nugent, for whose esteem he had a singular value, yet was Mr. Johnson a most unshaken church-of-England man.

(1) The Rev. James Compton (see *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 201.) and the Rev. Joseph Wilks. Mr. Wilks was born at Coughton Court, Warwickshire, and educated at St. Edmund's, a Benedictine monastery in Paris. He was sometime chaplain to Mr. Basil Fitzherbert, of Swinnerton in Staffordshire, and afterwards the chief priest of Bath. In 1788 he was added to the English Catholic committee, appointed to "watch over and promote their public interests," then consisting of thirteen persons; but having incurred the displeasure of his Bishop, Dr. Walmsley, (most probably with reference to the proceedings of this committee — see *Butler's Historical Memoirs of the Catholics*, vol. iv.) he quitted England, and, after visiting various parts of the continent, died at Douay in 1829, about the age of 82. Whilst in England, he was well received at Oxford; and it is said that he gave some assistance to Dr. Kennicot, when preparing his Hebrew Bible, in which language Wilks was a proficient. Mr. Ryding, who knew him intimately, describes Wilks as a humble and devout man, possessing very superior talents. At Johnson's suggestion, he wrote the Life of Socrates, which the former promised to revise, particularly with a view to expunge any Gallicisms which might have crept into the work. It is believed that it was finished, but never published. Johnson selected Wilks as his companion, when visiting the public libraries, &c. in Paris. At the King's library Johnson's singular appearance, and his full-mouthed pronunciation of Latin, exposed him to some ridicule from a French Abbé. According to Mr. Ryding, Johnson declared to the Prior, that, so much was he pleased with his reception by the Benedictines, that, could he procure an increase to his pension, he would return to France, with the intention of ending his days as an inmate of the monastery. To every one conversant with the opinions which Johnson openly expressed as to certain important tenets of Popery, as well as with his arguments against monastic and solitary life, not only will many weighty objections occur, as to the probability of such intention having been *seriously* entertained, but it must also be evident, that to a man retiring from the world an increase of pension would be useless, and that a life of literary ease would have proved a slender compensation to Johnson for the loss of Bolt Court and the Literary Club. — MARKLAND.

48. *Infidels.* — *Hume.* — *Raynal.*

The settled aversion Dr. Johnson felt towards an infidel he expressed to all ranks, and at all times, without the smallest reserve; for though on common occasions he paid great deference to birth or title, yet his regard for truth and virtue never gave way to meaner considerations. We talked of a dead wit one evening, and somebody praised him — "Let us never praise talents so ill employed, Sir; we foul our mouths by commending such infidels," said he. Allow him the *lumières* at least, entreated one of the company — "I do allow him, Sir," replied Johnson, "just enough to light him to hell."

Of a Jamaica gentleman, then lately dead — "He will not, whither he is now gone," said Johnson, "find much difference, I believe, either in the climate or the company."

The Abbé Raynal probably remembers that, being at the house of a common friend in London, the master of it approached Johnson with that gentleman so much celebrated in his hand, and this speech in his mouth: "Will you permit me, Sir, to present to you the Abbé Raynal?" "*No, Sir,*" replied the Doctor, very loud; and suddenly turned away from them both.

49. *Dancing Master.* — *Palymra.*

He would sometimes good-naturedly enter into a long chat for the instruction or entertainment of people he despised. I perfectly recollect his condescending to delight my daughter's dancing-master with a long argument about *his* art; which the man protested, at the close of the discourse, the Doctor knew more of than himself; who remained astonished, enlightened, and amused by the talk of a person little likely to make a good disquisition upon dancing.

I have sometimes indeed been rather pleased than vexed when Mr. Johnson has given a rough answer to a

man who perhaps deserved one only half as rough, because I knew he would repent of his hasty reproof, and make us all amends by some conversation at once instructive and entertaining, as in the following cases: A young fellow asked him abruptly one day, "Pray, Sir, what and where is Palmyra? I heard somebody talk last night of the ruins of Palmyra." "'T is a hill in Ireland," replies Johnson, "with palms growing on the top, and a bog at the bottom, and so they call it *Palm-mira.*" Seeing, however, that the lad thought him serious, and thanked him for the information, he undeceived him very gently indeed; told him the history, geography, and chronology of Tadmor in the wilderness, with every incident that literature could furnish, I think, or eloquence express, from the building of Solomon's palace to the voyage of Dawkins and Wood.

50. *Marriage.*

When he was musing over the fire in our drawing-room at Streatham, a young gentleman called to him suddenly, and I suppose he thought disrespectfully, in these words: "Mr. Johnson, would you advise me to marry?" "I would advise no man to marry, Sir," returns for answer in a very angry tone Dr. Johnson, "who is not likely to propagate understanding;" and so left the room. Our companion looked confounded, and I believe had scarce recovered the consciousness of his own existence, when Johnson came back, and drawing his chair among us, with altered looks and a softened voice, joined in the general chat, insensibly led the conversation to the subject of marriage, where he laid himself out in a dissertation so useful, so elegant, so founded on the true knowledge of human life, and so adorned with beauty of sentiment, that no one ever recollected the offence, except to rejoice in its consequences. He repented just as certainly, however, if he had been led to praise any

person or thing by accident more than he thought it deserved, and was on such occasions comically earnest to destroy the praise or pleasure he had unintentionally given.

51. *Paintings. — Reynolds.*

Sir Joshua Reynolds mentioned some picture as excellent. "It has often grieved me, Sir," said Mr. Johnson, "to see so much mind as the science of painting requires, laid out upon such perishable materials: why do not you oftener make use of copper? I could wish your superiority in the art you profess, to be preserved in stuff more durable than canvass." Sir Joshua urged the difficulty of procuring a plate large enough for historical subjects, and was going to raise further objections: — "What foppish obstacles are these!" exclaims, on a sudden, Dr. Johnson: "here is Thrale, who has a thousand tun of copper; you may paint it all round if you will, I suppose; it will serve him to brew in afterwards: will it not, Sir?" to my husband, who sat by.

Indeed, Dr. Johnson's utter scorn of painting was such, that I have heard him say, that he should sit very quietly in a room hung round with the works of the greatest masters, and never feel the slightest disposition to turn them if their backs were outermost, unless it might be for the sake of telling Sir Joshua that he *had* turned them. Such speeches may appear offensive to many, but those who knew he was too blind to discern the perfections of an art which applies itself immediately to our eyesight, must acknowledge he was not in the wrong.

52. *Prospects.*

He delighted no more in music than painting; he was almost as deaf as he was blind: travelling with Dr. Johnson was for these reasons tiresome enough.

Mr. Thrale loved prospects, and was mortified that his friend could not enjoy the sight of those different dispositions of wood and water, hill and valley, that travelling through England and France affords a man But when he wished to point them out to his companion: — "Never heed such nonsense," would be the reply: "a blade of grass is always a blade of grass, whether in one country or another: let us, if we *do* talk, talk about something; men and women are my subjects of enquiry; let us see how these differ from those we have left behind."

53. *Porridge Island.*

I was saying to a friend one day, that I did not like goose; one smells it so while it is roasting, said I: — "But you, Madam," replies the Doctor, "have been at all times a fortunate woman, having always had your hunger so forestalled by indulgence, that you never experienced the delight of smelling your dinner beforehand." Which pleasure, answered I pertly, is to be enjoyed in perfection by such as have the happiness to pass through Porridge Island(1) of a morning. "Come, come," says he gravely, "let's have no sneering at what is serious to so many: hundreds of your fellow-creatures, dear lady, turn another way, that they may not be tempted by the luxuries of Porridge Island to wish for gratifications they are not able to obtain: you are certainly not better than all of *them*; give God thanks that you are happier."

54. *Foppish Lamentations.*

I received on another occasion as just a rebuke from

(1) Porridge Island is a mean street in London, filled with cook-shops for the convenience of the poorer inhabitants; the real name of it I know not, but suspect that which it is generally known by to have been originally a term of derision. — P. It is not a street, but a paved alley near the church of St. Martin's in the Fields. — M.

Mr. Johnson, for an offence of the same nature, and hope I took care never to provoke a third; for, after a very long summer particularly hot and dry, I was wishing naturally, but thoughtlessly, for some rain to lay the dust, as we drove along the Surrey roads. "I cannot bear," replied he, with much asperity and an altered look, "when I know how many poor families will perish next winter for want of that bread which the present drought will deny them, to hear ladies sighing for rain, only that their complexions may not suffer from the heat, or their clothes be incommoded by the dust; — for shame! leave off such foppish lamentations, and study to relieve those whose distresses are real."

55. Johnson's Charity.

With advising others to be charitable, however, Dr. Johnson did not content himself. He gave away all he had, and all he ever had gotten, except the two thousand pounds he left behind; and the very small portion of his income which he spent on himself, with all our calculation, we never could make more than seventy, or, at most, fourscore pounds a year, and he pretended to allow himself a hundred. He had numberless dependents out of doors as well as in, "who," as he expressed it, "did not like to see him latterly unless he brought 'em money." For those people he used frequently to raise contributions on his richer friends; "and this," says he, "is one of the thousand reasons which ought to restrain a man from drony solitude and useless retirement."

56. Solitude.

"Solitude," added he one day, "is dangerous to reason, without being favourable to virtue: pleasures of some sort are necessary to the intellectual as to the corporeal health; and those who resist gaiety, will be

likely, for the most part, to fall a sacrifice to appetite; for the solicitations of sense are always at hand, and a dram to a vacant and solitary person is a speedy and seducing relief.

"Remember," continued he, "that the solitary mortal is certainly luxurious, probably superstitious, and possibly mad: the mind stagnates for want of employment, grows morbid, and is extinguished like a candle in foul air."

It was on this principle that Johnson encouraged parents to carry their daughters early and much into company: "for what harm can be done before so many witnesses? Solitude is the surest nurse of all prurient passions; and a girl in the hurry of preparation, or tumult of gaiety, has neither inclination nor leisure to let tender expressions soften or sink into her heart. The ball, the show, are not the dangerous places: no, 't is the private friend, the kind consoler, the companion of the easy vacant hour, whose compliance with her opinions can flatter her vanity, and whose conversation can just soothe, without ever stretching her mind, that is the lover to be feared: he who buzzes in her ear at court, or at the opera, must be contented to buzz in vain."

These notions Dr. Johnson carried so very far, that I have heard him say, "If you would shut up any man with any woman, so as to make them derive their whole pleasure from each other, they would inevitably fall in love, as it is called, with each other; but at six months' end, if you would throw them both into public life where they might change partners at pleasure, each would soon forget that fondness which mutual dependence, and the paucity of general amusement alone, had caused, and each would separately feel delighted by their release."

57. Useless Singularity.—Cards.—Dress.—Dancing.

Mr. Johnson was indeed unjustly supposed to be a lover of singularity. Few people had a more settled reverence for the world than he, or was less captivated by new modes of behaviour introduced, or innovations on the long-received customs of common life. He hated the way of leaving a company without taking notice to the lady of the house that he was going; and did not much like any of the contrivances by which ease has been lately introduced into society instead of ceremony, which had more of his approbation.

Cards, dress, and dancing all found their advocates in Dr. Johnson, who inculcated, upon principle, the cultivation of those arts, which many a moralist thinks himself bound to reject, and many a Christian holds unfit to be practised.

"No person," said he one day, "goes under-dressed till he thinks himself of consequence enough to forbear carrying the badge of his rank upon his back." And in answer to the arguments urged by Puritans, Quakers, &c., against showy decorations of the human figure, I once heard him exclaim, "Oh, let us not be found, when our Master calls us, ripping the lace off our waistcoats, but the spirit of contention from our souls and tongues! Let us all conform in outward customs, which are of no consequence, to the manners of those whom we live among, and despise such paltry distinctions. Alas, Sir," continued he, "a man who cannot get to heaven in a green coat, will not find his way thither the sooner in a grey one."

On an occasion of less consequence, when he turned his back on Lord Bolingbroke in the rooms at Brighthelmstone, he made this excuse:—"I am not obliged, Sir," said he to Mr. Thrale, who stood fretting, "to find reasons for respecting the rank of him who will not condescend to declare it by his dress, or some other

visible mark: what are stars and other signs of superiority made for?"

58. *General Satire.—Physic.—Law.*

Though no man, perhaps, made such rough replies as Dr. Johnson, yet nobody had a more just aversion to general satire. He always hated and censured Swift for his unprovoked bitterness against the professors of medicine; and used to challenge his friends, when they lamented the exorbitancy of physicians' fees, to produce him one instance of an estate raised by physic in England. When an acquaintance, too, was one day exclaiming against the tediousness of the law and its partiality — "Let us hear, Sir," said Johnson, "no general abuse; the law is the last result of human wisdom acting upon human experience for the benefit of the public."

59. *Unnecessary Scruples.*

As the mind of Dr. Johnson was greatly expanded, so his first care was for general, not particular or petty morality; and those teachers had more of his blame than praise, I think, who seek to oppress life with unnecessary scruples: "Scruples would," as he observed, "certainly make men miserable, and seldom make them good. Let us ever," he said, "studiously fly from those instructors against whom our Saviour denounces heavy judgments, for having bound up burdens grievous to be borne, and laid them on the shoulders of mortal men."

No one had, however, higher notions of the hard task of true Christianity than Johnson, whose daily terror lest he had not done enough originated in piety, but ended in little less than disease. Reasonable with regard to others, he had formed vain hopes of performing impossibilities himself; and finding his good works ever below his desires and intent, filled his imagination with

fears that he should never obtain forgiveness for omissions of duty and criminal waste of time.

60. *Jesting.*

Mr. Johnson liked a frolic or a jest well enough; though he had strange serious rules about it too; and very angry was he if any body offered to be merry when he was disposed to be grave. "You have an ill-founded notion," said he, "that it is clever to turn matters off with a joke, as the phrase is; whereas, nothing produces enmity so certain, as one person's showing a disposition to be merry, when another is inclined to be either serious or displeased."

61. *Distressed Authors.*

No man told a story with so good a grace, or knew so well what would make an effect upon his auditors. When he raised contributions for some distressed author, or wit in want, he often made us all more than amends by diverting descriptions of the lives they were then passing in corners, unseen by any body but himself and that odd old surgeon, Robert Levett, whom he kept in his house to tend the out-pensioners, and of whom he said, most truly and sublimely, that

> "In misery's darkest caverns known,
> His ready help was ever nigh,
> Where hopeless anguish pour'd his groan,
> And lonely want retired to die."

I have forgotten the year, but it could scarcely I think be later than 1765 or 1766, that he was called abruptly from our house after dinner, and returning in about three hours, said, he had been with an enraged author, whose landlady pressed him for payment within doors, while the bailiffs beset him without; that he was drinking himself drunk with Madeira to drown care, and fretting over a novel which when finished was to be his

whole fortune; but he could not get it done for distraction, nor could he step out of doors to offer it to sale. Mr. Johnson therefore set away the bottle, and went to the bookseller, recommending the performance, and desiring some immediate relief; which when he brought back to the writer, he called the woman of the house directly to partake of punch, and pass their time in merriment. (1)

There was a Mr. Boyce, too, who wrote some very elegant verses printed in the Magazines of five-and-twenty years ago, of whose ingenuity and distress I have heard Dr. Johnson tell some curious anecdotes; particularly, that when he was almost perishing with hunger, and some money was produced to purchase him a dinner, he got a bit of roast beef, but could not eat it without catchup, and laid out the last half-guinea he possessed in truffles and mushrooms, eating them in bed, too, for want of clothes, or even a shirt to sit up in.

Another man, for whom he often begged, made as wild use of his friend's beneficence as these, spending in punch the solitary guinea which had been brought him one morning; when resolving to add another claimant to a share of the bowl, besides a woman who always lived with him, and a footman who used to carry out petitions for charity, he borrowed a chairman's watch, and pawning it for half a crown, paid a clergyman to marry him to a fellow-lodger in the wretched house they all inhabited, and got so drunk over the guinea bowl of punch the evening of his wedding day, that having many years lost the use of one leg, he now contrived to fall from the top of the stairs to the bottom, and break his arm; in which condition his companions left him to call Mr. Johnson, who relating the series of his tragi-comical distresses, obtained from the Literary Club a seasonable relief

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. II. p. 193.]

62. *The Literary Club.*

Of that respectable society I have heard him speak in the highest terms, and with a magnificent panegyric on each member, when it consisted only of a dozen or fourteen friends; but as soon as the necessity of enlarging it brought in new faces, and took off from his confidence in the company, he grew less fond of the meeting, and loudly proclaimed his carelessness *who* might be admitted, when it was become a mere dinner club.

63. *Johnson's Incredulity.*

Mr. Johnson's incredulity amounted almost to disease, and I have seen it mortify his companions exceedingly. Two gentlemen, I perfectly well remember, dining with us at Streatham in the summer 1782, when Elliot's brave defence of Gibraltar was a subject of common discourse, one of these men naturally enough began some talk about red-hot balls thrown with surprising dexterity and effect. which Dr. Johnson having listened some time to —"I would advise you, Sir," said he with a cold sneer, "never to relate this story again: you really can scarce imagine how *very poor* a figure you make in the telling of it." Our guest being bred a Quaker, and I believe a man of an extremely gentle disposition, needed no more reproofs for the same folly; so if he ever did speak again, it was in a low voice to the friend who came with him. The check was given before dinner, and after coffee I left the room. When in the evening, however, our companions were returned to London, and Mr. Johnson and myself were left alone, with only our usual family about us—"I did not quarrel with those Quaker fellows," said he, very seriously. "You did perfectly right," replied I; "for they gave you no cause of offence." "No offence!" returned he with an altered voice; "and is it nothing then to sit whispering together when *I* am present, without ever

directing their discourse towards me, or offering me a share in the conversation?" That was because you frighted him who spoke first about those hot balls. "Why, Madam, if a creature is neither capable of giving dignity to falsehood, nor willing to remain contented with the truth, he deserves no better treatment." (1)

Mr. Johnson's fixed incredulity (2) of every thing he heard, and his little care to conceal that incredulity, was teasing enough to be sure: and I saw Mr. Sharp was pained exceedingly, when relating the history of a hurricane that happened about that time in the West Indies, where, for aught I know, he had himself lost some friends too, he observed Dr. Johnson believed not a syllable of the account: — "For 'tis so easy," says he, "for a man to fill his mouth with a wonder, and run about telling the lie before it can be detected, that I have no heart to believe hurricanes easily raised by the first inventor, and blown forwards by thousands more." I asked him once if he believed the story of the destruc-

(1) Mr. Malone, in his MS. notes, is very indignant that Mrs. Piozzi has omitted to state what the story was which produced this observation, and because she has not done so questions the veracity of the whole anecdote; but it is very clear that Mrs. Piozzi's object was to exhibit *Johnson's manners*, and not to record the minute details of the Quaker's story. — C.

(2) Mr. Malone, in his MS. notes, observes on this passage, "*Here is another* GROSS MISREPRESENTATION. *He had no fixed incredulity concerning every thing he heard; but he had observed the great laxity with which almost every story is told, and therefore always examined it accurately, and frequently found some gross exaggeration. The writer herself had not the smallest regard for truth, as Johnson told Mr. Boswell* (*see his Life of Johnson*), *and hence this scrutinising habit of her guest was to her a very sore subject.*" On this I must take leave to say, that Mr. Malone's observation defeats itself; because if Dr. Johnson's incredulity was a *sore subject* with Mrs. Piozzi, she cannot be blamed for recording it. Mr. Malone might have questioned her *judgment*, in supposing that Johnson was equally incredulous as to other persons, but not her *sincerity*, in describing him as she found him; and if he found *almost every story told with great laxity*, is it surprising that he should have an habitual incredulity? — C.

tion of Lisbon by an earthquake when it first happened: — "Oh! not for six months," said he, "at least: I *did* think that story too dreadful to be credited, and can hardly yet persuade myself that it was true to the full extent we all of us have heard."

61. *Contradiction. — Burney. — Pepys. — Skaiting.*

Among the numberless people, however, whom I heard him daily contradict, I never yet saw any one who did not take it patiently excepting Dr. Burney, from whose habitual softness of manners I little expected such an exertion of spirit: the event was as little to be expected. Mr. Johnson asked his pardon generously and genteelly, and when he left the room rose up to shake hands with him, that they might part in peace.

On another occasion, when he had violently provoked Mr. Pepys (1), in a different but perhaps not a less offensive manner, till something much too like a quarrel was grown up between them, the moment he was gone, "Now," says Dr. Johnson, "is Pepys gone home hating me, who love him better than I did before: he spoke in defence of his dead friend; but though I hope *I* spoke better who spoke against him, yet all my eloquence will gain me nothing but an honest man for my enemy!" He did not, however, cordially love Mr. Pepys, though he respected his abilities. "I knew the dog was a scholar," said he, when they had been disputing about the classics for three hours together one morning at Streatham; "but that he had so much taste and so much knowledge I did *not* believe. I might have taken Barnard's word, though, for Barnard would not lie."

We had got a little French print among us at Brighthelmstone, in November, 1782, of some people skaiting, with these lines written under: —

(1) See *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 57. — C.

> "Sur un mince chrystal l'hyver conduit leurs pas,
> Le précipice est sous la glace;
> Telle est de nos plaisirs la legère surface,
> Glissez mortels; n'appuyez pas."

And I begged translations from every body. Dr. Johnson gave me this:—

> "O'er ice the rapid skaiter flies,
> With sport above and death below,
> Where mischief lurks in gay disguise,
> Thus lightly touch and quickly go."

He was, however, most exceedingly enraged when he knew that in the course of the season I had asked half a dozen acquaintance to do the same thing, and said, it was a piece of treachery, and done to make every body else look little when compared to my favourite friends the *Pepyses*, whose translations were unquestionably the best. I will insert them, because he *did* say so. This is the distich given me by Sir Lucas, to whom I owe more solid obligations, no less than the power of thanking him for the life he saved, and whose least valuable praise is the correctness of his taste:—

> "O'er the ice as o'er pleasure you lightly should glide;
> Both have gulphs which their flattering surfaces hide."

This other more serious one was written by his brother:—

> "Swift o'er the level how the skaiters slide,
> And skim the glitt'ring surface as they go:
> Thus o'er life's specious pleasures lightly glide,
> But pause not, press not on the gulph below."

Dr. Johnson seeing this last, and thinking a moment, repeated,—

> "O'er crackling ice, o'er gulphs profound,
> With nimble glide the skaiters play;
> O'er treacherous pleasure's flow'ry ground
> Thus lightly skim, and haste away."

65. *Severity.—Dogs and Wives.—Mrs. Johnson.*

When I once mentioned Shenstone's idea, that some little quarrel among lovers, relations, and friends was useful, and contributed to their general happiness upon the whole, by making the soul feel her elastic force, and return to the beloved object with renewed delight;—"Why, what a pernicious maxim is this now," cries Johnson: "*all* quarrels ought to be avoided studiously, particularly conjugal ones, as no one can possibly tell where they may end; besides that lasting dislike is often the consequence of occasional disgust, and that the cup of life is surely bitter enough, without squeezing in the hateful rind of resentment."

It was upon something like the same principle, and from his general hatred of refinement, that when I told him how Dr. Collier, in order to keep the servants in humour with his favourite dog, by seeming rough with the animal himself on many occasions, and crying out, "Why will nobody knock this cur's brains out?" meant to conciliate their tenderness towards Pompey; he returned me for answer, "that the maxim was evidently false, and founded on ignorance of human life: that the servants would kick the dog the sooner for having obtained such a sanction to their severity: and I once," added he, "chid my wife for beating the cat before the maid, 'who will now,' said I, 'treat puss with cruelty, perhaps, and plead her mistress's example.'"

I asked him upon this, if he ever disputed with his wife? (I had heard that he loved her passionately.) "Perpetually," said he: "my wife had a particular reverence for cleanliness, and desired the praise of neatness in her dress and furniture, as many ladies do, till they become troublesome to their best friends, slaves to their own besoms, and only sigh for the hour of sweeping their husbands out of the house as dirt and useless lumber: 'A clean floor is *so* comfortable,' she would say

sometimes, by way of twitting; till at last I told her, that I thought we had had talk enough about the *floor*, we would now have a touch at the *ceiling*."

I have heard him blame her for a fault many people have, of setting the miseries of their neighbours half unintentionally, half wantonly before their eyes, showing them the bad side of their profession, situation, &c. He said, "she would lament the dependence of pupilage to a young heir, &c.; and once told a waterman who rowed her along the Thames in a wherry, that he was no happier than a galley slave, one being chained to the oar by authority, the other by want. I had, however," said he, laughing, "the wit to get her daughter on my side always before we began the dispute. She read comedy better than any body he ever heard," he said; "in tragedy she mouthed too much."

66. *Husband and Wife.—Boarding-Schools.*

When any disputes arose between our married acquaintance, Mr. Johnson always sided with the husband, "whom," he said, "the woman had probably provoked so often, she scarce knew when or how she had disobliged him first." "Women," says Dr. Johnson, "give great offence by a contemptuous spirit of non-compliance on petty occasions. The man calls his wife to walk with him in the shade, and she feels a strange desire just at that moment to sit in the sun: he offers to read her a play, or sing her a song, and she calls the children in to disturb them, or advises him to seize that opportunity of settling the family accounts. Twenty such tricks will the faithfulest wife in the world not refuse to play, and then look astonished when the fellow fetches in a mistress."

"Boarding-schools were established," continued he, "for the conjugal quiet of the parents: the two partners cannot agree which child to fondle, nor how to

fondle them, so they put the young ones to school, and remove the cause of contention. The little girl pokes her head, the mother reproves her sharply: 'Do not mind your mamma,' says the father, 'my dear, but do your own way.' The mother complains to me of this: 'Madam,' said I, 'your husband is right all the while; he is with you but two hours of the day perhaps, and then you tease him by making the child cry. Are not ten hours enough for tuition? And are the hours of pleasure so frequent in life, that when a man gets a couple of quiet ones to spend in familiar chat with his wife, they must be poisoned by petty mortifications? Put missey to school; she will learn to hold her head like her neighbours, and you will no longer torment your family for want of other talk.'"

67. *Vacuity of Life.*

The vacuity of life had, at some early period of his life, struck so forcibly on the mind of Mr. Johnson, that it became, by repeated impression, his favourite hypothesis, and the general tenor of his reasonings commonly ended there, wherever they might begin. Such things, therefore, as other philosophers often attribute to various and contradictory causes, appeared to him uniform enough; all was done to fill up the time, upon his principle. I used to tell him, that it was like the clown's answer, in "As You Like It," of "Oh Lord, Sir!" for that it suited every occasion. One man, for example, was profligate and wild, as we call it, followed the girls, or sat still at the gaming-table. "Why, life must be filled up," says Johnson, "and the man who is not capable of intellectual pleasures must content himself with such as his senses can afford." Another was a hoarder: "Why, a fellow must do something; and what so easy to a narrow mind as hoarding halfpence till they turn into sixpences?"

68. *Avarice.*

Avarice was a vice against which, however, I never much heard Mr. Johnson declaim, till one represented it to him connected with cruelty, or some such disgraceful companion. "Do not," said he, "discourage your children from hoarding, if they have a taste to it: whoever lays up his penny rather than part with it for a cake, at least is not the slave of gross appetite; and shows besides a preference, always to be esteemed, of the future to the present moment. Such a mind may be made a good one; but the natural spendthrift, who grasps his pleasures greedily and coarsely, and cares for nothing but immediate indulgence, is very little to be valued above a negro."

69. *Friendship.*

We were speaking of a gentleman who loved his friend: "Make him prime minister," says Johnson, "and see how long his friend will be remembered." But he had a rougher answer for me, when I commended a sermon preached by an intimate acquaintance of our own at the trading end of the town. "What was the subject, Madam," says Dr. Johnson? "Friendship, Sir," replied I. "Why now, is it not strange that a wise man, like our dear little Evans, should take it in his head to preach on such a subject, in a place where no one can be thinking of it?" "Why, what are they thinking upon, Sir," said I? "Why, the men are thinking of their money, I suppose, and the women are thinking of their mops."

70. *Laced Coats.—Gentlemen.*

Dr. Johnson did not like that the upper ranks should be dignified with the name of *the world.* Sir Joshua Reynolds said one day, that nobody wore laced coats now; and that once every body wore them. "See now," says Johnson, "how absurd that is; as if the bulk of man-

kind consisted of fine gentlemen that came to him to sit for their pictures. If every man who wears a laced coat (that he can pay for) was extirpated, who would miss them?" With all this haughty contempt of gentility, no praise was more welcome to Dr. Johnson, than that which he said had the notions or manners of a gentleman: which character I have heard him define with accuracy, and describe with elegance. "Officers," he said, "were falsely supposed to have the carriage of gentlemen; whereas no profession left a stronger brand behind it than that of a soldier; and it was the essence of a gentleman's character to bear the visible mark of no profession whatever."

71. *Molly Aston.*

"Molly Aston," says Dr. Johnson, "was a beauty and a scholar, and a wit and Whig; and she talked all in praise of liberty: and so I made this epigram upon her. She was the loveliest creature I ever saw!

> 'Liber ut esse velim, suasisti, pulchra Maria,
> Ut maneam liber—pulchra Maria, vale!'"

"Will it do this way in English, Sir?" said I,—

> "Persuasions to freedom fall oddly from you;
> If freedom we seek—fair Maria, adieu!" (1)

"It will do well enough," replied he, "but it is translated by a lady, and the ladies never loved Molly Aston."

I asked him what his wife thought of this attachment? "She was jealous, to be sure," said he, "and teased me sometimes when I would let her; and one day, as a fortune-telling gipsy passed us when we were walking out in company with two or three friends in the country, she made the wench look at my hand, but soon repented her curiosity; 'for, says the gipsy, 'Your heart is divided, Sir, between a Betty and a

(1) [See *ante*, Vol. VII. p. 200.]

Molly: Betty loves you best, but you take most delight in Molly's company.' When I turned about to laugh, I saw my wife was crying. Pretty charmer! she had no reason!"

72. *Mrs. Fitzherbert.*

It was, I believe, long after the currents of life had driven him to a great distance from this lady, that he spent much of his time with Mrs. Fitzherbert, of whom, he always spoke with esteem and tenderness, and with a veneration very difficult to deserve. "That woman," said he, "loved her husband as we hope and desire to be loved by our guardian angel. Fitzherbert was a gay, good-humoured fellow, generous of his money and of his meat, and desirous of nothing but cheerful society among people distinguished in *some* way, in *any way* I think; for Rousseau and St. Austin would have been equally welcome to his table and to his kindness: the lady, however, was of another way of thinking; her first care was to preserve her husband's soul from corruption; her second, to keep his estate entire for their children: and I owed my good reception in the family to the idea she had entertained, that I was fit company for Fitzherbert, whom I loved extremely. 'They dare not,' said she, 'swear, and take other conversation-liberties before *you*.'" I asked if her husband returned her regard? "He felt her influence too powerfully," replied Mr. Johnson: "no man will be fond of what forces him daily to feel himself inferior. She stood at the door of her paradise in Derbyshire, like the angel with the flaming sword, to keep the devil at a distance. But she was not immortal, poor dear! she died, and her husband felt at once afflicted and released." I inquired if she was handsome? "She would have been handsome for a queen," replied the panegyrist; "her beauty had more in it of majesty than of attraction, more of the dignity of virtue than the vivacity of wit."

73. Miss Boothby.

The friend of this lady, Miss Boothby, succeeded her in the management of Mr. Fitzherbert's family, and in the esteem of Dr. Johnson; though he told me she pushed her piety to bigotry, her devotion to enthusiasm; that she somewhat disqualified herself for the duties of *this* life, by her perpetual aspirations after the *next*: such was, however, the purity of her mind, he said, and such the graces of her manner, that Lord Lyttelton and he used to strive for her preference with an emulation that occasioned hourly disgust, and ended in lasting animosity. "You may see," said he to me, when the Poets' Lives were printed, "that dear Boothby is at my heart still.(1) She *would* delight in that fellow Lyttelton's company though, all that I could do; and I cannot

(1) Notwithstanding the mention of the "*heart*" in this anecdote and in Johnson's letter to this lady in January 1755 (see *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 28.), there seems no reason to suppose that (as Miss Seward asserted) this was really an affair of the heart — "an early attachment." The *other* letters, of which Boswell says that "their merit is not so apparent" (but which will be hereafter given), are written in still warmer terms of affection: Miss Boothby is "a sweet angel," and "a dear angel," and his "*heart* is full of tenderness;" but when the whole series of letters are read, it will be seen that the friendship began late in the life of both parties; that it was wholly *platonic*, or, to speak more properly, *spiritual*; and that the letters in which these very affectionate expressions occur were written when Johnson believed that Miss Boothby was *dying*. It must also be observed, that it is very unlikely that Johnson should *seriously* confess that he had been so unjust to Lord Lyttelton from any private pique; and it seems, by his letters to Mrs. Thrale (April 1779), that he had no such feeling towards Lyttelton, and that he had applied to his lordship's friends to write the life; and finally, it is to be noted, Lord Lyttelton married his second lady in 1749, and Johnson does not seem to have known Miss Boothby till 1754. In short, I have no doubt, nor will any one who reads the letters and considers how little personal intercourse there could have been between Miss Boothby and Dr. Johnson, that the whole story is a mistake, founded, perhaps, on some confusion between Miss Boothby and Miss Aston, and countenanced, it must be admitted, by the warm expressions of the letters. — C.

forgive even his memory the preference given by a mind like hers."

I have heard Baretti say, that when this lady di d, Dr. Johnson was almost distracted with his grief; and that the friends about him had much ado to calm the violence of his emotion.

74. *Death of Mrs. Johnson.*

Dr. Taylor too related once to Mr. Thrale and me, that when he lost his wife, the negro Francis ran away, though in the middle of the night, to Westminster, to fetch Dr. Taylor to his master, who was all but wild with excess of sorrow, and scarce knew him when he arrived: after some minutes, however, the doctor proposed their going to prayers, as the only rational method of calming the disorder this misfortune had occasioned in both their spirits. Time, and resignation to the will of God, cured every breach in his heart before I made acquaintance with him, though he always persisted in saying he never rightly recovered the loss of his wife. It is in allusion to her that he records the observation of a female critic, as he calls her, in Gay's Life; and the lady of great beauty and elegance, mentioned in the criticisms upon Pope's epitaphs, was Miss Molly Aston. The person spoken of in his strictures upon Young's poetry, is the writer of these Anecdotes.

75. *Improvvisation.—Metastasio.*

Mr. Johnson did indeed possess an almost Tuscan power of improvvisation: when he called to my daughter, who was consulting with a friend about a new gown and dressed hat she thought of wearing at an assembly, thus suddenly, while she hoped he was not listening to their conversation,—

"Wear the gown, and wear the hat,
Snatch thy pleasures while they last;
Hadst thou nine lives like a cat,
Soon those nine lives would be past."

It is impossible to deny to such little sallies the power of the Florentines, who do not permit their verses to be ever written down (though they often deserve it), because, as they express it, *così se perderebbi la poca gloria.*

As for translations, we used to make him sometimes run off with one or two in a good humour. He was praising this song of Metastasio, —

" Deh, se piacermi vuoi,
Lascia i sospetti tuoi,
Non mi turbar conquesto
Molesto dubitar:
Chi ciecamente crede,
Impegna a serbar fede;
Chi sempre inganno aspetta,
Alletta ad ingannar."

"Should you like it in English," said he, " thus? —

Would you hope to gain my heart,
Bid your teasing doubts depart;
He who blindly trusts, will find
Faith from every generous mind:
He who still expects deceit,
Only teaches how to cheat."

Mr. Baretti coaxed him likewise one day at Streatham out of a translation of Emirena's speech to the false courtier Aquileius, and it is probably printed before now, as I think two or three people took copies; bu perhaps it has slipped their memories.

" Ah! tu in corte invecchiasti, e giurerei
Che fra i pochi non sei tenace ancora
Dell' antica onestà: quando bisogna,
Saprai sereno in volto
Vezzeggiare un nemico; acciò vi cada,
Aprirgli innanzi un precipizio, e poi
Piangerne la caduta. Offrirti a tutti
E non esser che tuo; di false lodi
Vestir le accuse, ed aggravar le colpe
Nel farne la difesa, ognor dal trono

I buoni allontanar; d'ogni castigo
Lasciar l'odio allo scettro, e d'ogni dono
Il merito usurpar: tener nascosto
Sotto un zelo apparente ùn empio fine,
Ne fabbricar che sulle altrui rouine."

"Grown old in courts, thou art not surely one
Who keeps the rigid rules of ancient honour;
Well skill'd to soothe a foe with looks of kindness,
To sink the fatal precipice before him,
And then lament his fall with seeming friendship:
Open to all, true only to thyself,
Thou know'st those arts which blast with envious praise,
Which aggravate a fault with feign'd excuses,
And drive discountenanced virtue from the throne:
That leave the blame of rigour to the prince,
And of his every gift usurp the merit;
That hide in seeming zeal a wicked purpose,
And only build upon another's ruin."

These characters Dr. Johnson, however, did not delight in reading, or in hearing of: he always maintained that the world was not half as wicked as it was represented; and he might very well continue in that opinion, as he resolutely drove from him every story that could make him change it; and when Mr. Bickerstaff's flight confirmed the report of his guilt, and my husband said, in answer to Johnson's astonishment, that he had long been a suspected man: "By those who look close to the ground, dirt will be seen, Sir," was the lofty reply: "I hope I see things from a greater distance."

76. *Whining Wives.* — *Sleepy-souled Wives.* — *Honeysuckle Wives.*

I pitied a friend before him, who had a whining wife that found every thing painful to her, and nothing pleasing. — "He does not know that she whimpers," says Johnson; "when a door has creaked for a fortnight together, you may observe — the master will scarcely give sixpence to get it oiled."

Of another lady, more insipid than offensive, I once heard him say, "She has some softness indeed, but so has a pillow." And when one observed in reply, that her husband's fidelity and attachment were exemplary, notwithstanding this low account at which her perfections were rated — "Why, Sir," cries the Doctor, "being married to those sleepy-souled women, is just like playing at cards for nothing: no passion is excited, and the time is filled up. I do not, however, envy a fellow one of those honeysuckle wives for my part, as they are but *creepers* at best, and commonly destroy the tree they so tenderly cling about."

77. *Wales and Scotland.*

For a lady of quality, since dead, who received us at her husband's seat in Wales with less attention than he had long been accustomed to, he had a rougher denunciation: "That woman," cries Johnson, "is like sour small beer, the beverage of her table, and produce of the wretched country she lives in: like that, she could never have been a good thing, and even that bad thing is spoiled." This was in the same vein of asperity, and I believe with something like the same provocation, that he observed of a Scotch lady, "that she resembled a dead nettle; were she alive," said he, "she would sting."

Mr. Johnson's hatred of the Scotch is so well known, and so many of his *bons mots* expressive of that hatred have been already repeated in so many books and pamphlets, that 'tis perhaps scarcely worth while to write down the conversation between him and a friend of that nation who always resides in London, and who at his return from the Hebrides asked him, with a firm tone of voice, what he thought of his country? "That it is a very vile country to be sure, Sir," returned for answer Dr. Johnson. "Well, Sir!" replies the other, somewhat mortified, "God made it." "Certainly he did," answers Mr. Johnson again; "but we must

always remember that he made it for Scotchmen, and comparisons are odious, Mr. Strahan; but God made hell."

78. *Story-telling.* — *Foote.* — *Hawkins Browne.*

Dr. Johnson did not, I think, much delight in that kind of conversation which consists in telling stories: "Every body," said he, "tells stories of me, and I tell stories of nobody. I do not recollect," added he, "that I have ever told *you*, that have been always favourites, above three stories; but I hope I do not play the old fool, and force people to hear uninteresting narratives, only because I once was diverted with them myself."

He was not, however, an enemy to that sort of talk from the famous Mr. Foote, "whose happiness of manner in relating was such," he said, "as subdued arrogance and roused stupidity: *His* stories were truly like those of Biron in 'Love's Labour Lost,' so *very* attractive, —

> 'That aged ears play'd truant with his tales,
> And younger hearings were quite ravished;
> So sweet and voluble was his discourse."

"Of all conversers, however," added he, "the late Hawkins Browne was the most delightful with whom I ever was in company: his talk was at once so elegant so apparently artless, so pure, and so pleasing, it seemed a perpetual stream of sentiment, enlivened by gaiety, and sparkling with images."

79. *George Psalmanazar.* — *Sick-beds.*

When I asked Dr. Johnson, who was the *best* man he had ever known? "Psalmanazar," was the unexpected reply: he said, likewise, "that though a native of France, as his friend imagined, he possessed more of the English language than any one of the other foreigners who had separately fallen in his way. Though

there was much esteem however, there was I believe but little confidence between them; they conversed merely about general topics, religion and learning, of which both were undoubtedly stupendous examples; and, with regard to true Christian perfection, I have heard Johnson say, "that George Psalmanazar's piety, penitence, and virtue exceeded almost what we read as wonderful, even in the lives of saints."

I forget in what year it was that this extraordinary person lived and died at a house in Old Street, where Mr. Johnson was witness to his talents and virtues, and to his final preference of the Church of England, after having studied, disgraced, and adorned so many modes of worship. The name he went by, was not supposed by his friend to be that of his family, but all inquiries were vain: his reasons for concealing his original were penitentiary; he deserved no other name than that of the impostor, he said. That portion of the Universal History which was written by him, does not seem to me to be composed with peculiar spirit, but all traces of the wit and the wanderer were probably worn out before he undertook the work. His pious and patient endurance of a tedious illness, ending in an exemplary death, confirmed the strong impression his merit had made upon the mind of Mr. Johnson. "It is so *very* difficult," said he, "always for a sick man not to be a scoundrel. Oh! set the pillows soft, here is Mr. Grumbler o'coming: Ah! let no air in for the world, Mr. Grumbler will be here presently."

This perpetual preference is so offensive where the privileges of sickness are besides supported by wealth, and nourished by dependence, that one cannot much wonder that a rough mind is revolted by them. It was however at once comical and *touchant* (as the French call it), to observe Mr. Johnson so habitually watchful against this sort of behaviour, that he was often ready

to suspect himself of it; and when one asked him gently how he did, — "Ready to become a scoundrel, Madam," would commonly be the answer: "with a little more spoiling you will, I think, make me a complete rascal."

80. *Johnson and Goldsmith.*

Johnson made Goldsmith a comical answer one day, when seeming to repine at the success of Beattie's "Essay on Truth," — "Here's such a stir," said he, "about a fellow that has written one book, and I have written many." "Ah, doctor," says his friend, "there go two and forty sixpences you know to one guinea."

They had spent an evening with Eaton Graham too; I remember hearing it was at some tavern. His heart was open, and he began inviting away; told what he could do to make his college agreeable, and begged the visit might not be delayed. Goldsmith thanked him, and proposed setting out with Mr. Johnson for Buckinghamshire in a fortnight; "Nay hold, Dr. *Minor*," says the other, "I did not invite you."

Many such mortifications arose in the course of their intimacy to be sure, but few more laughable than when the newspapers had tacked them together as the pedant and his flatterer in "Love's Labour Lost." Dr. Goldsmith came to his friend, fretting and foaming, and vowing vengeance against the printer, &c., till Mr. Johnson, tired of the bustle, and desirous to think of something else, cried out at last, "Why, what would'st thou have, dear doctor! who the plague is hurt with all this nonsense? and how is a man the worse, I wonder, in his health, purse, or character, for being called *Holofernes*?" "I do not know," replies the other, "how you may relish being called Holofernes, but I do not like at least to play *Goodman Dull*."

81. *Abuse and Flattery.* — *Hannah More.*

Dr. Johnson was famous for disregarding public abuse. When the people criticised and answered his pamphlets, papers, &c. "Why now, these fellows are only advertising my book," he would say; "it is surely better a man should be abused than forgotten." When Churchill nettled him however, it is certain he felt the sting, or that poet's works would hardly have been left out of the edition. But of that I have no right to decide: the booksellers, perhaps, did not put Churchill on their list. I know Mr. Johnson was exceedingly zealous to declare how very little he had to do with the selection. Churchill's works, too, might possibly be rejected by him upon a higher principle; the highest indeed, if he was inspired by the same laudable motive which made him reject every authority for a word in his dictionary, that could only be gleaned from writers dangerous to religion or morality: — "I would not," said he, "send people to look for words in a book, that by such a casual seizure of the mind might chance to mislead it for ever." In consequence of this delicacy, Mrs. Montagu once observed, that were an angel to give the *imprimatur*, Dr. Johnson's works were among those very few which would not be lessened by a line. That such praise, from such a lady, should delight him, is not strange; insensibility in a case like that, must have been the result alone of arrogance acting on stupidity.

Mr. Johnson had, indeed, no dislike to the commendations which he knew he deserved: "What signifies protesting so against flattery!" would he cry; "when a person speaks well of one, it must be either true or false, you know; if true, let us rejoice in his good opinion; if he lies, it is a proof at least that he loves more to please me, than to sit silent when he need say nothing."

That natural roughness of his manner, so often men-

tioned, would, notwithstanding the regularity of his notions, burst through them all from time to time; and he once bade a very celebrated lady (1), who praised him with too much zeal perhaps, or perhaps too strong an emphasis (which always offended him), "consider what her flattery was worth, before she choked *him* with it." A few more winters passed in the talking world, showed him the value of that friend's commendations however; and he was very sorry for the disgusting speech he made her.

82. *Conversation without Effort.*

I used to think Mr. Johnson's determined preference of a cold monotonous talker over an emphatical and violent one, would make him quite a favourite among the men of *ton*, whose insensibility, or affectation of perpetual calmness, certainly did not give to him the offence it does to many. He loved "conversation without effort," he said: and the encomiums I have heard him so often pronounce on the manners of Topham Beauclerc in society, constantly ended in that peculiar praise, that 'it was without *effort*.'

83. *Richardson.*

We were talking of Richardson who wrote Clarissa: "You think I love flattery," says Dr. Johnson, "and so I do; but a little too much always disgusts me: that fellow Richardson, on the contrary, could not be contented to sail quietly down the stream of reputation, without longing to taste the froth from every stroke of the oar."

84. *Newspaper Abuse.*

With regard to slight insults from newspaper abuse, I have already declared his notions: "they sting one," says he, "but as a fly stings a horse; and the eagle will not catch flies."

(1) [Hannah More. See *ante*, Vol. VII. p. 137.]



T. Beauclerk

85. *Death and Sickness.* — *Garrick.* — *Thrale.*

Knowing the state of Mr. Johnson's nerves, and how easily they were affected, I forbore reading in a new magazine one day, the death of a Samuel Johnson who expired that month; but my companion, snatching up the book, saw it himself, and contrary to my expectation, — "Oh!" said he; "I hope death will now be glutted with Sam. Johnsons, and let me alone for some time to come: I read of another namesake's departure last week."

Though Mr. Johnson was commonly affected, even to agony, at the thoughts of a friend's dying, he troubled himself very little with the complaints they might make to him about ill health. "Dear Doctor," said he one day to a common acquaintance, who lamented the tender state of his *inside*, "do not be like the spider, man; and spin conversation thus incessantly out of thy own bowels."

I told him of another friend, who suffered grievously with the gout: - - "He will live a vast many years for all that," replied he, "and then what signifies how much he suffers? but he will die at last, poor fellow, there's the misery; gout seldom takes the fort by a coup-de-main, but, turning the siege into a blockade obliges it to surrender at discretion."

A lady he thought well of was disordered in her head: — "What help has she called in?" inquired Johnson. "Dr. James, Sir," was the reply. "What is her disease?" "Oh, nothing positive, rather a gradual and gentle decline." "She will die then, pretty dear!" answered he: "When death's pale horse runs away with persons on full speed, an active physician may possibly give them a turn; but if he carries them on an even slow pace, down hill too! no care nor skill can save them."

When Garrick was on his last sick-bed, no arguments, or recitals of such facts as I had heard, would

persuade Mr. Johnson of his danger: he had prepossessed himself with a notion, that to say a man was sick, was very near wishing him so; and few things offended him more, than prognosticating even the death of an ordinary acquaintance. "Ay, ay," said he, "Swift knew the world pretty well, when he said, that

> 'Some dire misfortune to portend,
> No enemy can match a friend.'"

The danger then of Mr. Garrick, or of Mr. Thrale whom he loved better, was an image which no one durst present before his view: he always persisted in the possibility and hope of their recovering disorders from which no human creatures, by human means alone, ever did recover. His distress for their loss was, for that very reason, poignant to excess; but his fears of his own salvation were excessive: his truly tolerant spirit, and Christian charity, which "hopeth all things," and "believeth all things," made him rely securely on the safety of his friends, while his earnest aspiration after a blessed immortality made him cautious of his own steps, and timorous concerning their consequences. He knew how much had been given, and filled his mind with fancies of how much would be required, till his impressed imagination was often disturbed by them, and his health suffered from the sensibility of his too tender conscience: a real Christian is so apt to find his task above his power of performance!

86. *Belief.— Opinion.*

Mr. Johnson did not, however, give into ridiculous refinements either of speculation or practice, or suffer himself to be deluded by specious appearances. "I have had dust thrown in my eyes too often," would he say, "to be blinded so. Let us never confound matters of belief with matters of opinion."

87. *Hope. — Possession.*

Some one urged in his presence the preference of hope to possession; and, as I remember, produced an Italian sonnet on the subject. "Let us not," cries Johnson, "amuse ourselves with subtleties and sonnets, when speaking about hope, which is the follower of faith and the precursor of eternity; but if you only mean those air-built hopes which to-day excites and to-morrow will destroy, let us talk away, and remember that we only talk of the pleasures of hope: we feel those of possession, and no man in his senses would change the last for the first: such hope is a mere bubble, that by a gentle breath may be blown to what size you will almost, but a rough blast bursts it at once. Hope is an amusement rather than a good, and adapted to none but very tranquil minds."

88. *Unprofitable Chat.*

Mr. Johnson hated what we call unprofitable chat; and to a gentleman who had disserted some time about the natural history of the mouse — "I wonder what such a one would have said," cried Johnson, "if he had ever had the luck to see a *lion!*"

89. *Apparitions.*

I well remember that at Brighthelmstone once, when he was not present, Mr. Beauclerc asserted that he was afraid of spirits; and I, who was secretly offended at the charge, asked him, the first opportunity I could find, what ground he had ever given to the world for such a report? "I can," replied he, "recollect nothing nearer it, than my telling Dr. Lawrence many years ago, that a long time after my poor mother's death, I heard her voice call *Sam!*" What answer did the doctor make to your story, Sir," said I? "None in the world," replied he; and suddenly changed the con-

versation. Now, as Mr. Johnson had a most unshaken faith, without any mixture of credulity, this story must either have been strictly true, or his persuasion of its truth the effect of disordered spirits. I relate the anecdote precisely as he told it me; but could not prevail on him to draw out the talk into length, for further satisfaction of my curiosity.

90. *Talents and Erudition.*

He always made a great difference in his esteem between talents and erudition; and when he saw a person eminent for literature, though wholly unconversable, it fretted him. "Teaching such tonies," said he to me one day, "is like setting a lady's diamonds in lead, which only obscures the lustre of the stone, and makes the possessor ashamed on 't."

91. *Every-day Knowledge.*

Useful, and what we call every-day knowledge had the most of his just praise. "Let your boy learn arithmetic, dear Madam," was his advice to the mother of a rich young heir: "he will not then be a prey to every rascal which this town swarms with: teach him the value of money, and how to reckon it; ignorance to a wealthy lad of one-and-twenty is only so much fat to a sick sheep: it just serves to call the *rooks* about him; —

> And all that prey on vice or folly
> Joy to see their quarry fly;
> Here the gamester, light and jolly,
> There the lender, grave and sly."

These improviso lines, making part of a long copy of verses which my regard for the youth (1), on whose birthday they were written, obliges me to suppress lest they should give him pain, show a mind of surprising

(1) [Sir John Lade. See *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 414.]

activity and warmth; the more so, as he was past seventy years of age when he composed them.

92. *Mental Decay.*

But nothing more certainly offended Mr. Johnson, than the idea of a man's faculties (mental ones I mean) decaying by time. "It is not true, Sir," would he say; "what a man could once do, he would always do, unless indeed by dint of vicious indolence, and compliance with the nephews and nieces who crowd round an old fellow, and help to tuck him in, till he, contented with the exchange of fame for ease, e'en resolves to let them set the pillows at his back, and gives no further proof of his existence than just to suck the jelly that prolongs it."

93. *Life and Romance.*

For such a life, or such a death, Dr. Johnson was indeed never intended by Providence: his mind was like a warm climate which brings every thing to perfection suddenly and vigorously, not like the alembicated productions of artificial fire, which always betray the difficulty of bringing them forth when their size is disproportionate to their flavour. "*Je ferais un Roman tout comme un autre, mais la vie n'est point un Roman,*" says a famous French writer; and this was so certainly the opinion of the author of the Rambler, that all his conversation precepts tended towards the dispersion of romantic ideas, and were chiefly intended to promote the cultivation of

"That which before thee lies in daily life."

94. *Clarissa. — Lear. — Iago. — Falstaff.*

And when he talked of authors, his praise went spontaneously to such passages as are sure, in his own phrase, to leave something behind them useful on common occasions, or observant of common manners. For example, it was not the two *last*, but the two *first*,

volumes of Clarissa that he prized; "for give me a sick bed, and a dying lady," said he, "and I'll be pathetic myself: but Richardson had picked the kernel of life," he said, "while Fielding was contented with the husk." It was not King Lear cursing his daughters or deprecating the storm, that I remember his commendations of; but Iago's ingenious malice and subtle revenge; or Prince Hal's gay compliance with the vices of Falstaff, whom he all along despised. Those plays had, indeed, no rivals in Johnson's favour: "No man but Shakspeare," he said, "could have drawn Sir John." *

95. *Addison's Prose.*

His manner of criticising and commending Addison's prose, was the same in conversation as we read it in the printed strictures, and many of the expressions used have been heard to fall from him on common occasions. It was notwithstanding observable enough (or I fancied so), that he did never like, though he always thought fit to praise it; and his praises resembled those of a man who extols the superior elegance of high painted porcelain, while he himself always chooses to eat off *plate*. I told him so one day, and he neither denied it nor appeared displeased.

96. *The Pathetic in Poetry.*

Of the pathetic in poetry he never liked to speak; and the only passage I ever heard him applaud as particularly tender in any common book, was Jane Shore's exclamation in the last act,—

"Forgive me! *but* forgive me!"

It was not, however, from the want of a susceptible heart that he hated to cite tender expressions; for he was more strongly and more violently affected by the force of words representing ideas capable of affecting

him at all, than any other man in the world, I believe; and when he would try to repeat the celebrated *Prosa Ecclesiastica pro Mortuis*, as it is called, beginning *Dies iræ, Dies illa*, he could never pass the stanza ending thus, *Tantus labor non sit cassus*, without bursting into a flood of tears; which sensibility I used to quote against him when he would inveigh against devotional poetry, and protest that all religious verses were cold and feeble, and unworthy the subject; which ought to be treated with higher reverence, he said, than either poets or painters could presume to excite or bestow.

97. *Promptitude of Thought.*

Promptitude of thought, and quickness of expression, were among the peculiar felicities of Johnson. His notions rose up like the dragon's teeth sowed by Cadmus all ready clothed, and in bright armour too, fit for immediate battle. He was therefore (as somebody is said to have expressed it) a tremendous converser, and few people ventured to try their skill against an antagonist with whom contention was so hopeless. One gentleman, however, who dined at a nobleman's house in his company and that of Mr. Thrale, to whom I was obliged for the anecdote, was willing to enter the lists in defence of King William's character; and having opposed and contradicted Johnson two or three times petulantly enough, the master of the house began to feel uneasy, and expect disagreeable consequences: to avoid which he said, loud enough for the Doctor to hear, "Our friend here has no meaning now in all this, except just to relate at club to-morrow how he teased Johnson at dinner to-day—this is all to do himself *honour*." "No, upon my word," replied the other, "I see no *honour* in it, whatever you may do." "Well, Sir!" returned Mr. Johnson sternly, "if you do not *see* the *honour*, I am sure I *feel* the *disgrace*."

A young fellow, less confident of his own abilities, lamenting one day that he had lost all his Greek, — "I believe it happened at the same time, Sir," said Johnson, "that I lost all my large estate in Yorkshire."

The Lincolnshire lady (1), who showed him a grotto she had been making, came off no better, as I remember: "Would it not be a pretty cool habitation in summer, Mr. Johnson?" said she. "I think it would, Madam," replied he, — "for a toad."

98. *Compliments.*

When Mr. Johnson had a mind to compliment any one, he did it with more dignity to himself, and better effect upon the company, than any man. When Sir Joshua Reynolds left the room one day, he said, "There goes a man not to be spoiled by prosperity." And when Mrs. Montagu showed him some China plates which had once belonged to Queen Elizabeth, he told her, "that they had no reason to be ashamed of their present possessor, who was so little inferior to the first."

He was not at all offended when, comparing all our acquaintance to some animal or other, we pitched upon the elephant for his resemblance, adding that the proboscis of that creature was like his mind most exactly, strong to buffet even the tiger, and pliable to pick up even the pin. The truth is, Mr. Johnson was often good-humouredly willing to join in childish amusements, and hated to be left out of any innocent merriment that was going forward. Mr. Murphy always said, he was incomparable at buffoonery; and I verily think, if he had had good eyes, and a form less inflexible, he would have made an admirable mimic.

(1) Mrs. Langton, mother of his friend. — *Malone MS. notes.* This was not meant as rudeness to the lady; but Johnson hated grottos, and thought, as he has said in his Life of Pope, that they were "not often the wish or pleasure of an Englishman, who has more frequent need to solicit than to exclude the sun.

99. *Johnson on Horseback. — Hunting.*

He certainly rode on Mr. Thrale's old hunter with a good firmness, and though he would follow the hounds fifty miles an end sometimes, would never own himself either tired or amused. "I have now learned," said he, "by hunting, to perceive, that it is no diversion at all, nor ever takes a man out of himself for a moment: the dogs have less sagacity than I could have prevailed on myself to suppose; and the gentlemen often call to me not to ride over them. It is very strange, and very melancholy, that the paucity of human pleasures should persuade us ever to call hunting one of them." He was however proud to be amongst the sportsmen; and I think no praise ever went so close to his heart, as when Mr. Hamilton called out one day upon Brighthelmstone Downs, "Why, Johnson rides as well, for aught I see, as the most illiterate fellow in England." (1)

100. *Conversation.*

Mr. Johnson, as he was a very talking man himself, had an idea that nothing promoted happiness so much as conversation. A friend's erudition was commended one day as equally deep and strong: — "He will not talk, Sir," was the reply, "so his learning does no good, and his wit, if he has it, gives us no pleasure: out of all his boasted stores I never heard him force but one word, and that word was *Richard.*"

With a contempt not inferior he received the praises of a pretty lady's face and behaviour: "She says nothing, Sir," answers Johnson; "a talking blackamoor were better than a white creature who adds nothing to life, and by sitting down before one thus desperately

(1) Mr. Boswell says, that Johnson *once* hunted; this seems more probable than Mrs. Piozzi's and Hawkins' statements, from which it would be inferred, that he hunted *habitually.* It seems hard to figure to one's self Dr. Johnson fairly joining in this violent and, to him, one would suppose, extravagant and dangerous amusement. — C.

silent, takes away the confidence one should have in the company of her chair if she were once out of it."

101. *Love.—Francis Barber.*

As we had been saying one day that no subject failed of receiving dignity from the manner in which Mr. Johnson treated it, a lady at my house said she would make him talk about love, and took her measures accordingly, deriding the novels of the day because they treated about love. "It is not," replied our philosopher, "because they treat, as you call it, about love, but because they treat of nothing, that they are despicable: we must not ridicule a passion which he who never felt never was happy, and he who laughs at never deserves to feel—a passion which has caused the change of empires, and the loss of worlds—a passion which has inspired heroism and subdued avarice." He thought he had already said too much. "A passion, in short," added he with an altered tone, "that consumes me away for my pretty Fanny (1) here, and she is very cruel."

He told us, however, in the course of the same chat, how his negro Francis had been eminent for his success among the girls. Seeing us all laugh, "I must have you know, ladies," said he, "that Frank has carried the empire of Cupid further than most men. When I was in Lincolnshire so many years ago, he attended me thither; and when we returned home together, I found that a female haymaker had followed him to London for love." Francis was indeed no small favourite with his master; who retained, however, a prodigious influence over his most violent passions.

On the birthday of our eldest daughter, and that of our friend Dr. Johnson, the 17th and 18th of September, we every year made up a little dance and supper, to divert our servants and their friends, putting the

(1) Miss Burney, the author of "Evelina."

summer-house into their hands for the two evenings, to fill with acquaintance and merriment. Francis and his white wife were invited of course. She was eminently pretty, and he was jealous, as my maids told me. On the first of these days' amusements (I know not what year) Frank took offence at some attentions paid his *Desdemona*, and walked away next morning to London in wrath. His master and I driving the same road an hour after, overtook him. "What is the matter, child," says Dr. Johnson, "that you leave Streatham to-day? *Art sick?*" "He is jealous," whispered I. "Are you jealous of your wife, you stupid blockhead?" cries out his master in another tone." The fellow hesitated; and, "*To be sure, Sir, I don't quite approve, Sir,*" was the stammering reply. "Why, what do they *do* to her, man? do the footmen kiss her?" "No, Sir, no! — Kiss my *wife, Sir!* — *I hope not, Sir.*" "Why, what *do* they do to her, my lad?" "Why nothing, Sir, I'm sure, Sir." "Why, then, go back directly and dance, you dog, do; and let's hear no more of such empty lamentations." I believe, however, that Francis was scarcely as much the object of Mr. Johnson's personal kindness, as the representative of Dr. Bathurst, for whose sake he would have loved any body, or any thing. When he spoke of negroes, he always appeared to think them of a race naturally inferior, and made few exceptions in favour of his own; yet whenever disputes arose in his household among the many odd inhabitants of which it consisted, he always sided with Francis against the others, whom he suspected (not unjustly, I believe) of greater malignity.

102. *Poverty of Sentiment.*

It was never against people of coarse life that his contempt was expressed, while poverty of sentiment in men who considered themselves to be company for *the parlour*, as he called it, was what he would not bear.

A very ignorant young fellow, who had plagued us all for nine or ten months, died at last consumptive: "I think," said Mr. Johnson when he heard the news, "I am afraid, I should have been more concerned for the death of the *dog;* but ——" (hesitating a while) "I am not wrong now in all this, for the dog acted up to his character on every occasion that we know; but that dunce of a fellow helped forward the general disgrace of humanity." "Why, dear Sir," said I, "how odd you are! you have often said the lad was not capable of receiving further instruction." "He was," replied the Doctor, "like a corked bottle, with a drop of dirty water in it, to be sure; one might pump upon it for ever without the smallest effect; but when every method to open and clean it had been tried, you would not have me grieve that the bottle was broke at last?"

This was the same youth who told us he had been reading Lucius Florus; *Florus Delphini* was the phrase; and "my mother," said he, "thought it had something to do with Delphos; but of that I know nothing." "Who founded Rome then?" inquired Mr. Thrale. The lad replied, "Romulus." "And who succeeded Romulus?" said I. A long pause, and apparently distressful hesitation, followed the difficult question. "Why will you ask him in terms that he does not comprehend?" said Mr. Johnson enraged. "You might as well bid him tell you who phlebotomised Romulus. This fellow's dulness is elastic," continued he, "and all we do is but like kicking at a woolsack."

103. *Public Schools.—Useful Knowledge.*

I remember his saying, "A boy should never be sent to Eton or Westminster school before he is twelve years old at least; for if in his years of babyhood he 'scapes that general and transcendent knowledge without which life is perpetually put to a stand, he will never

get it at a public school, where if he does not learn Latin and Greek, he learns nothing."

Mr. Johnson often said, "that there was too much stress laid upon literature as indispensably necessary: there is surely no need that every body should be a scholar, no call that every one should square the circle. Our manner of teaching," said he, "cramps and warps many a mind, which if left more at liberty would have been respectable in some way, though perhaps not in that. We lop our trees, and prune them, and pinch them about," he would say, "and nail them tight up to the wall, while a good standard is at last the only thing for bearing healthy fruit, though it commonly begins later. Let the people learn necessary knowledge; let them learn to count their fingers, and to count their money, before they are caring for the classics; for," says Mr. Johnson, "though I do not quite agree with the proverb, that *Nullum numen abest si sit prudentia*, yet we may very well say, that *Nullum numen adest — ni sit prudentia*."

104. *Ignorance.*

We had been visiting at a lady's house, whom as we returned some of the company ridiculed for her ignorance: "She is not ignorant," said he, "I believe, of any thing she has been taught, or of any thing she is desirous to know; and I suppose if one wanted a little *run tea*, she might be a proper person enough to apply to."

105. *Johnson's Pride and Severity.*

When I relate these various instances of contemptuous behaviour shown to a variety of people, I am aware that those who till now have heard little of Mr. Johnson will here cry out against his pride and his severity; yet I have been as careful as I could to tell them, that all he did was gentle, if all he said was rough. Had I

given anecdotes of his actions instead of his words, we should, I am sure, have had nothing on record but acts of virtue differently modified, as different occasions called that virtue forth: and among all the nine biographical essays or performances which I have heard will at last be written about dear Dr. Johnson, no mean or wretched, no wicked or even slightly culpable action will, I trust, be found, to produce and put in the scale against a life of seventy years, spent in the uniform practice of every moral excellence and every Christian perfection, save humility alone, says a critic: but that, I think, *must* be excepted. He was not, however, wanting even in that to a degree seldom attained by man, when the duties of piety or charity called it forth.

Lowly towards God, and docile towards the church; implicit in his belief of the gospel, and ever respectful towards the people appointed to teach it, tender of the unhappy, and affectionate to the poor, let no one hastily condemn as proud, a character which may perhaps somewhat justly be censured as arrogant. It must however be remembered again, that even this arrogance was never shown without some intention, immediate or remote, of mending some fault or conveying some instruction. Had I meant to make a panegyric on Mr. Johnson's well-known excellencies, I should have told his deeds only, not his words—sincerely protesting, that as I never saw him once do a wrong thing, so we had accustomed ourselves to look upon him almost as an excepted being; and I should as much have expected injustice from Socrates, or impiety from Pascal, as the slightest deviation from truth and goodness in any transaction one might be engaged in with Samuel Johnson.

106. *Veracity.—Clarissa.—Amelia.*

His attention to veracity was without equal or example: and when I mentioned Clarissa as a perfect

character; "On the contrary," said he, "you may observe there is always something which she prefers to truth. Fielding's Amelia was the most pleasing heroine of all the romances," he said; "but that vile broken nose, never cured, ruined the sale of perhaps the only book, which, being printed off betimes one morning, a new edition was called for before night."

107. *Lucy Porter. — Contradiction.*

His wife's daughter, Mrs. Lucy Porter of Litchfield, whose veneration for his person and character has ever been the greatest possible, being opposed one day in conversation by a clergyman who came often to her house, and feeling somewhat offended, cried out suddenly, "Why, Mr Pearson," said she, "you are just like Dr. Johnson, I think: I do not mean that you are a man of the greatest capacity in all the world like Dr. Johnson, but that you contradict one every word one speaks, just like him." Mr. Johnson told me the story: he was present at the giving of the reproof. It was, however, observable that with all his odd severity, he could not keep even indifferent people from teasing him with unaccountable confessions of silly conduct, which one would think they would scarcely have had inclination to reveal even to their tenderest and most intimate companions; and it was from these unaccountable volunteers in sincerity, that he learned to warn the world against follies little known, and seldom thought on by other moralists.

108. *Vows.*

Much of his eloquence, and much of his logic, have I heard him use to prevent men from making vows on trivial occasion; and when he saw a person oddly perplexed about a slight difficulty, "Let the man alone," he would say, "and torment him no more about it; there is a vow in the case, I am convinced; but is it

not very strange, that people should be neither afraid nor ashamed of bringing in God Almighty thus at every turn between themselves and their dinner?" When I asked what ground he had for such imaginations, he informed me, that "a young lady once told him in confidence, that she could never persuade herself to be dressed against the bell rung for dinner, till she had made a vow to Heaven, that she would never more be absent from the family meals."

109. *Scruples of Conscience.*

The strangest applications in the world were certainly made from time to time towards Mr. Johnson; who by that means had an inexhaustible fund of anecdote, and could, if he pleased, tell the most astonishing stories of human folly and human weakness, that ever were confided to any man not a confessor by profession.

One day when he was in a humour to record some of them, he told us the following tale: "A person," said he, "had for these last five weeks often called at my door, but would not leave his name, or other message; but that he wished to speak with me. At last we met, and he told me that he was oppressed by scruples of conscience. I blamed him gently for not applying, as the rules of our church direct, to his parish priest or other discreet clergyman; when, after some compliments on his part, he told me, that he was clerk to a very eminent trader, at whose warehouses much business consisted in packing goods in order to go abroad: that he was often tempted to take paper and packthread enough for his own use, and that he had indeed done so so often, that he could recollect no time when he ever had bought any for himself. 'But probably,' said I, 'your master was wholly indifferent with regard to such trivial emoluments; you had better ask for it at once, and so take your trifles with

consent.' 'Oh, Sir!' replies the visitor, 'my master bid me have as much as I pleased, and was half angry when I talked to him about it.' 'Then pray, Sir,' said I, 'tease me no more about such airy nothings;' —and was going on to be very angry, when I recollected that the fellow might be mad perhaps: so I asked him when he left the counting-house of an evening?' 'At seven o'clock, Sir.' 'And when do you go to-bed, Sir?' 'At twelve o'clock.' 'Then,' replied I, 'I have at least learned thus much by my new acquaintance;—that five hours of the four-and-twenty unemployed are enough for a man to go mad in; so I would advise you, Sir, to study algebra, if you are not an adept already in it; your head would get less *muddy*, and you will leave off tormenting your neighbours about paper and packthread, while we all live together in a world that is bursting with sin and sorrow. It is perhaps needless to add, that this visitor came no more."

110. *Luck with Pupils.*

He had not much luck with two boys that he used to tell of, to whom he had taught the classics, "so that," he said, "they were no incompetent or mean scholars:" it was necessary, however, that something more familiar should be known, and he bid them read the History of England. After a few months had elapsed, he asked them "if they could recollect who first destroyed the monasteries in our island?" One modestly replied, that he did not know; the other said, *Jesus Christ.*

111. "*Burke in a Bag.*"

An Irish trader at our house one day heard Dr. Johnson launch out into very great and greatly deserved praises of Mr. Edmund Burke; delighted to find his countryman stood so high in the opinion of a man he

had been told so much of, "Sir," said he, "give me leave to tell something of Mr. Burke now." We were all silent, and the honest Hibernian began to relate how Mr. Burke went to see the collieries in a distant province; and "he would go down into the bowels of the earth in a bag, and he would examine every thing: he went in a bag, Sir, and ventured his health and his life for knowledge; but he took care of his clothes, that they should not be spoiled, for he went down in a bag." "Well, Sir," says Mr. Johnson good-humouredly, "if our friend Mund should die in any of these hazardous exploits, you and I would write his life and panegyric together; and your chapter of it should be entitled thus: '*Burke in a Bag.*'"

He had always a very great personal regard and particular affection for Mr. Edmund Burke, as well as an esteem difficult for me to repeat, though for him only easy to express. And when, at the end of the year 1774, the general election called us all different ways, and broke up the delightful society in which we had spent some time at Beaconsfield, Dr. Johnson shook the hospitable master of the house kindly by the hand, and said, "Farewell, my dear Sir, and remember that I wish you all the success which ought to be wished you, which can possibly be wished you indeed—*by an honest man.*"

112. *Sorrows of Vanity.*

When I have told how many follies Dr. Johnson knew of others, I must not omit to mention with how much fidelity he would always have kept them concealed, could they of whom he knew the absurdities have been contented, in the common phrase, to keep their own counsel. But, returning home one day from dining at the chaplain's table, he told me, that Dr. Goldsmith had given a very comical and unnecessarily exact recital there, of his own feelings when his play

was hissed; telling the company how he went indeed to the Literary Club at night, and chatted gaily among his friends, as if nothing had happened amiss; that to impress them still more forcibly with an idea of his magnanimity, he even sang his favourite song about an old woman tossed in a blanket seventeen times as high as the moon: "but all this while I was suffering horrid tortures," said he, "and verily believe that if I had put a bit into my mouth it would have strangled me on the spot, I was so excessively ill; but I made more noise than usual to cover all that, and so they never perceived my not eating, nor I believe at all imaged to themselves the anguish of my heart: but when all were gone except Johnson here, I burst out a crying, and even swore that I would never write again. "All which, Doctor," says Mr. Johnson, amazed at his odd frankness, "I thought had been a secret between you and me; and I am sure I would not have said any thing about it for the world." "Now see," repeated he, when he told the story, "what a figure a man makes who thus unaccountably chooses to be the frigid narrator of his own disgrace. *Il volto sciolto, ed i pensieri stretti*, was a proverb made on purpose for such mortals, to keep people, if possible, from being thus the heralds of their own shame: for what compassion can they gain by such silly narratives? No man should be expected to sympathise with the sorrows of vanity. If, then, you are mortified by any ill usage, whether real or supposed, keep at least the account of such mortifications to yourself, and forbear to proclaim how meanly you are thought on by others, unless you desire to be meanly thought of by all."

113. *Superfluous Ingenuity. — Nicknames*

The little history of another friend's superfluous ingenuity will contribute to introduce a similar remark. He had a daughter of about fourteen years old, as I re-

member, fat and clumsy: and though the father adored, and desired others to adore her, yet being aware perhaps that she was not what the French call *pétrie des graces*, and thinking, I suppose, that the old maxim, of beginning to laugh at yourself first where you have any thing ridiculous about you, was a good one, he comically enough called his girl *Trundle* when he spoke of her: and many who bore neither of them any ill-will felt disposed to laugh at the happiness of the appellation. "See now," says Dr. Johnson, "what haste people are in to be hooted. Nobody ever thought of this fellow nor of his daughter, could he but have been quiet himself, and forborne to call the eyes of the world on his dowdy and her deformity. But it teaches one to see at least, that if nobody else will nickname one's children the parents will e'en do it themselves."

114. "*Blinking Sam.*"

All this held true in matters to Mr. Johnson of more serious consequence. When Sir Joshua Reynolds had painted his portrait looking into the slit of his pen, and holding it almost close to his eye, as was his general custom, he felt displeased, and told me, "he would not be known by posterity for his *defects* only, let Sir Joshua do his worst." I said, in reply, that Reynolds had no such difficulties about himself, and that he might observe the picture which hung up in the room where we were talking, represented Sir Joshua holding his ear in his hand to catch the sound. "He may paint himself as deaf if he chooses," replied Johnson; "but I will not be *blinking Sam.*"

115. *Shakespeare.*

It is chiefly for the sake of evincing the regularity and steadiness of Mr. Johnson's mind that I have given these trifling memoirs, to show that his soul was not different from that of another person, but, as it was, greater; and to give those who did not know him a just

idea of his acquiescence in what we call vulgar prejudices, and of his extreme distance from those notions which the world has agreed, I know not very well why, to call romantic. It is, indeed, observable in his preface to Shakspeare, that while other critics expatiate on the creative powers and vivid imagination of that matchless poet, Dr. Johnson commends him for giving so just a representation of human manners, "that from his scenes a hermit might estimate the value of society, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions."

116. *Choice of a Wife.*

The general and constant advice he gave, too, when consulted about the choice of a wife, a profession, or whatever influences a man's particular and immediate happiness, was always to reject no positive good from fears of its contrary consequences. "Do not," said he, "forbear to marry a beautiful woman if you can find such, out of a fancy that she will be less constant than an ugly one; or condemn yourself to the society of coarseness and vulgarity for fear of the expenses, or other dangers, of elegance and personal charms; which have been always acknowledged as a positive good, and for the want of which there should be always given some weighty compensation. I have, however," continued Mr. Johnson, "seen some prudent fellows who forbore to connect themselves with beauty lest coquetry should be near, and with wit or birth lest insolence should lurk behind them, till they have been forced by their discretion to linger life away in tasteless stupidity, and choose to count the moments by remembrance of pain instead of enjoyment of pleasure."

117. *Professions.—Roger Ascham.*

When professions were talked of, "Scorn," said Mr. Johnson, "to put your behaviour under the dominion of canters: never think it clever to call physic a mean

study, or law a dry one; or ask a baby of seven years old which way *his genius* leads him, when we all know that a boy of seven years old has no *genius* for any thing except a peg-top and an apple-pye; but fix on some business where much money may be got and little virtue risked: follow that business steadily, and do not live as Roger Ascham says the wits do, '*men know not how; and at last die obscurely, men mark not where.*'"

118. *Opinion of the World.*

Dr. Johnson had a veneration for the voice of mankind beyond what most people will own; and as he liberally confessed that all his own disappointments proceeded from himself, he hated to hear others complain of general injustice. I remember when lamentation was made of the neglect showed to Jeremiah Markland, a great philologist, as some one ventured to call him:—"He is a scholar undoubtedly, Sir," replied Dr. Johnson; "but remember that he would run from the world, and that it is not the world's business to run after him. I hate a fellow whom pride, or cowardice, or laziness drives into a corner, and does nothing when he is there but sit and *growl*; let him come out as I do, and *bark*."(1)

(1) Mr. Markland, who has favoured me with many kind and useful suggestions, observes on this passage, that "Johnson's censure was undeserved. Jeremiah Markland was certainly no *growler*. He sought for, because he loved, retirement; and *rejected* all the honours and rewards which were liberally offered to his acceptance. During a long life, he devoted himself unceasingly to those pursuits for which he was best fitted, collating the classics, and illustrating the Scriptures. 'Sequantur alii famam, aucupentur divitias, hic illa oculis irretortis contemplatus, post terga constanter rejecit.... In solitudinem se recepit, studiis excolendis et pauperibus sublevandis unicè intentus.' Such is the character given of Markland by his pupil and friend Edward Clarke." Mrs. Piozzi's flippant expression ("a great philologist, as some one ventured to call him") will excite a smile, when we recollect what Markland has done as a philologist, and the estimation in which he has been held both by the most learned of his contemporaries (including Johnson himself), and the most distinguished scholars of our own time. Dr. Kip

119. *Retirement from the World.*

The world, added he, is chiefly unjust and ungenerous in this, that all are ready to encourage a man who once talks of leaving it, and few things do really provoke me more, than to hear people prate of retirement, when they have neither skill to discern their own motives, nor penetration to estimate the consequences; but while a fellow is active to gain either power or wealth," continued he, "every body produces some hinderance to his advancement, some sage remark, or some unfavourable prediction; but let him once say slightly, I have had enough of this troublesome bustling world, 'tis time to leave it now: 'Ah, dear Sir!' cries the first old acquaintance he meets, I am glad to find you in this happy disposition: yes, dear friend! *do* retire, and think of nothing but your own ease: there's Mr. William will find it a pleasure to settle all your accounts, and relieve you from the fatigue; Miss Dolly makes the charmingest chicken broth in the world, and the cheesecakes we eat of hers once, how good they were: I will be coming every two or three days myself to chat with you in a quiet way; *so snug!* and tell you how

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ney, in a tone of the highest panegyric, numbered him with Bentley, Dawes, Toup, and Porson, and a still later writer has thus candidly enumerated his merits: "Markland was endowed with a respectable portion of judgment and sagacity. He was very laborious, loved retirement, and spent a long life in the study of the Greek and Latin languages. For modesty, candour, literary honesty, and courteousness to other scholars, he is justly considered as the mode which ought to be proposed for the imitation of every critic."—*Quart. Rev.* vol. vii. p. 442.: so far Mr. Markland. It is but just to all parties, that I should add, that (whatever Johnson may have said in the current of conversation, and probably in allusion to some minute and unrecorded circumstance) he had a fixed respect for the talents and character of Markland. For it will be seen, that on the 20th October, 1782, he wrote to Mr. Nichols, urging him to obtain some record of the Life of Markland, who, with Jortin and Thirlby, he calls three contemporaries of great eminence.—C.

matters go upon 'Change, or in the House, or, according to the blockhead's first pursuits, whether lucrative or politic, which thus he leaves; and lays himself down a voluntary prey to his own sensuality and sloth, while the ambition and avarice of the nephews and nieces, with their rascally adherents and coadjutors, reap the advantage, while they fatten their fool."

120. *Marrying for Money.*

As the votaries of retirement had little of Mr. Johnson's applause, unless he knew that the motives were merely devotional, and unless he was convinced that their rituals were accompanied by a mortified state of the body, the sole proof of their sincerity which he would admit, as a compensation for such fatigue as a worldly life of care and activity requires; so of the various states and conditions of humanity, he despised none more, I think, than the man who marries for a maintenance: and of a friend who made his alliance on no higher principles, he said once, "Now has that fellow" (it was a nobleman of whom we were speaking) "at length obtained a certainty of three meals a day, and for that certainty, like his brother dog in the fable, he will get his neck galled for life with a collar."

121. *Poverty.*

That poverty was an evil to be avoided by all honest means however, no man was more ready to avow: concealed poverty particularly, which he said was the general corrosive that destroyed the peace of almost every family; to which no evening perhaps ever returned without some new project for hiding the sorrows and dangers of the next day. "Want of money," says Dr. Johnson, "is sometimes concealed under pretended avarice, and sly hints of aversion to part with it; sometimes under stormy anger, and affectation of boundless rage; but oftener still under a show of thoughtless ex-

travagance and gay neglect; while, to a penetrating eye, none of these wretched veils suffice to keep the cruel truth from being seen. Poverty is *hic et ubique*," says he; "and if you do shut the jade out of the door, she will always contrive, in some manner, to poke her pale lean face in at the window."

122. *Old Age. — Dogs.*

I have mentioned before, that old age had very little of Mr. Johnson's reverence: "a man commonly grew wickeder as he grew older," he said, "at least he but changed the vices of youth; headstrong passion and wild temerity, for treacherous caution and desire to circumvent. I am always," said he, "on the young people's side, when there is a dispute between them and the old ones: for you have at least a chance for virtue till age has withered its very root."

While we were talking, my mother's spaniel, whom he never loved, stole our toast and butter; "Fie, Belle!" said I, "you used to be upon honour." "Yes, Madam," replies Johnson, "*but Belle grows old*." His reason for hating the dog was, "because she was a professed favourite," he said, "and because her lady ordered her from time to time to be washed and combed: a foolish trick," said he, "and an assumption of superiority that every one's nature revolts at; so because one must not wish ill to the lady in such cases," continued he, "one curses the cur." The truth is, Belle was not well behaved, and being a large spaniel, was toublesome enough at dinner with frequent solicitations to be fed. "This animal," said Dr. Johnson one day, "would have been of extraordinary merit and value in the state of Lycurgus; for she condemns one to the exertion of perpetual vigilance."

123. *Cats. — Hodge's Oysters.*

He had that strong aversion felt by all the lower ranks of people towards four-footed companions very

completely, notwithstanding he had, for many years, a cat which he called Hodge, that kept always in his room at Fleet Street; but so exact was he not to offend the human species by superfluous attention to brutes, that when the creature was grown sick and old, and could eat nothing but oysters, Mr. Johnson always went out himself to buy Hodge's dinner, that Francis the black's delicacy might not be hurt, at seeing himself employed for the convenience of a quadruped.

124. *Mr. Cholmondeley.*

No one was so attentive not to offend in all such sort of things as Dr. Johnson; nor so careful to maintain the ceremonies of life: and though he told Mr. Thrale once, that he had never sought to please till past thirty years old, considering the matter as hopeless, he had been always studious not to make enemies, by apparent preference of himself. It happened very comically, that the moment this curious conversation past, of which I was a silent auditress, was in the coach, in some distant province, either Shropshire or Derbyshire I believe; and as soon as it was over, Mr. Johnson took out of his pocket a little book and read, while a gentleman of no small distinction for his birth and elegance suddenly rode up to the carriage, and paying us all his proper compliments, was desirous not to neglect Dr. Johnson; but observing that he did not see him, tapped him gently on the shoulder. "'T is Mr. Cholmondeley," says my husband. "Well, Sir! and what if it is Mr. Cholmondeley?" says the other sternly, just lifting his eyes a moment from his book, and returning to it again with renewed avidity. (1)

(1) For Boswell's stricture on this passage, see *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 347. I subjoin Mr. Cholmondeley's own account of the circumstance, which however only confirms Mrs. Piozzi's statement: — "In the year 1774 I was making a tour in Derbyshire in a gig with Windham. Just as we came to the point of the hill going down into Matlock, we saw Mr. Thrale's

125. "*In Vino Veritas.*"

It was unlucky for those who delighted to echo Johnson's sentiments, that he would not endure from them to-day, what perhaps he had yesterday, by his own manner of treating the subject, made them fond of repeating; and I fancy Mr. Boswell has not forgotten, that though his friend one evening in a gay humour

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carriage and four, in which were Dr. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Thrale the horses were breathing after ascending the hill we had heard they were in those parts; of course this rencontre excited some interest. I, with all the conceit of a young man, saying, 'I know Dr. Johnson very well, I'll manage it all;' tripped very pertly from the gig to the carriage, shook hands with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, who were very glad to see me as people are glad in a commonplace way. Dr. Johnson took not the smallest notice, on which Mr. Thrale said, 'Dr. Johnson, here is Mr. Cholmondeley.' Dr. Johnson neither spoke nor moved. He repeated, 'Dr. Johnson, here is Mr. Cholmondeley.' Dr. Johnson was equally silent. Mr. Thrale repeated it a third time, when Dr. Johnson answered, 'Well, Sir!' and what if there is Mr. Cholmondeley?' I, of course, tripped back again, much entertained at the humorous way in which my conceit had been put down. I imagine Mrs. Thrale must, in some dispute, have reproached him with this, as an instance of unprovoked brutality towards an unoffending person. Four years afterwards, I went to dine at Mr. Thrale's, at Brighton. The house was small; the passage running close by the room into the street. I arrived before Dr Johnson was dressed. When he entered the room, he said, 'George, I want to speak to you.' He led me from the passage into the street; then said, 'George, I owe you reparation for an injury which I do not recollect. I am told that, some years ago, I met you on the point of Matlock Hill, and spoke to you with unjustifiable insolence, whether I was thinking of something else, or whether I had been quarrelling with Thrale, I know not; but I ought not so to have insulted an innocent unoffending young man; and I beg your pardon.' I told this to Mrs. Thrale, with all the animation such a beautiful trait was calculated to inspire; and after she published her garbled account of it, I called upon her, reminded her of this circumstance, pointed out to her how characteristic an anecdote it was, of a man whose temper was harsh, but whose principles were charitable in the extreme, and who was, consequently, always in a state of repentance for imaginary injuries. I enjoined her, by the love of truth and justice, to publish another edition of it, which she never did."—C.

talked in praise of wine, as one of the blessings permitted by Heaven when used with moderation, to enlighten the load of life, and give men strength to endure it; yet, when in consequence of such talk *he* thought fit to make a Bacchanalian discourse in its favour, Mr. Johnson contradicted him somewhat roughly, as I remember; and when, to assure himself of conquest, he added these words, "You must allow me, Sir, at least that it produces truth; *in vino veritas*, you know, Sir." "That," replied Mr. Johnson, "would be useless to a man who knew he was not a liar when he was sober."

126. *Ossian.—Macpherson.*

When one talks of giving and taking the lie familiarly, it is impossible to forbear recollecting the transactions between the editor of Ossian and the author of the Journey to the Hebrides. It was most observable to me, however, that Mr. Johnson never bore his antagonist the slightest degree of ill-will. He always kept those quarrels which belonged to him as a writer, separate from those which he had to do with as a man; but I never did hear him say in private one malicious word of a public enemy; and of Mr. Macpherson I once heard him speak respectfully, though his reply to the friend who asked him if *any man living* could have written such a book is well known, and has been often repeated: "Yes, Sir; many men, many women, and many children." I inquired of him myself if this story was authentic, and he said it was. I made the same inquiry concerning his account of the state of literature in Scotland, which was repeated up and down at one time by every body,—"How knowledge is divided among the Scots, like bread in a besieged town, to every man a mouthful, to no man a bellyful." This story he likewise acknowledged, and said besides, that "some officious friend had carried it to Lord Bute, who only

answered, 'Well, well! never mind what he says — he will have the pension all one.'"

127. *Prospects. — Glasgow and Brentford. — View on the St. Lawrence.*

Another famous reply to a Scotsman who commended the beauty and dignity of Glasgow, till Mr. Johnson stopped him by observing, that "he probably had never yet seen Brentford," was one of the jokes he owned: and said himself, that "when a gentleman of that country once mentioned the lovely prospects common in his nation, he could not help telling him, that the view of the London road was the prospect in which every Scotsman most naturally and most rationally delighted." Mrs. Brook received an answer not unlike this, when expatiating on the accumulation of sublime and beautiful objects, which form the fine prospect UP the river St. Lawrence in North America: —"Come, Madam," says Dr. Johnson, "confess that nothing ever equalled your pleasure in seeing that sight reversed; and finding yourself looking at the happy prospect DOWN the river St. Lawrence."

128. *Gardening. — Country Life.*

The truth is, he hated to hear about prospects and views, and laying out ground and taste in gardening: "That was the best garden," he said, "which produced most roots and fruits; and that water was most to be prized which contained most fish." He used to laugh at Shenstone most unmercifully for not caring whether there was any thing good to *eat* in the streams he was so fond of; "as if," says Johnson, "one could fill one's belly with hearing soft murmurs, or looking at rough cascades!" He loved the sight of fine forest trees however, and detested Brighthelmstone Downs, "because it was a country so truly desolate," he said, "that if one had a mind to hang one's self for desperation at being obliged

to live there, it would be difficult to find a tree on which to fasten the rope." Walking in a wood when it rained, was, I think, the only rural image he pleased his fancy with; "for," says he, "after one has gathered the apples in an orchard, one wishes them well baked, and removed to a London eating-house for enjoyment." (1)

With such notions, who can wonder he passed his time uncomfortably enough with us, whom he often complained of for living so much in the country; "feeding the chickens," as he said I did, "till I starved my own understanding. Get, however," said he, "a book about gardening, and study it hard, since you will pass your life with birds and flowers, and learn to raise the *largest* turnips, and to breed the *biggest* fowls." It was vain to assure him that the goodness of such dishes did not depend upon their size; he laughed at the people who covered their canals with foreign fowls, "when," says he, "our own geese and ganders are twice as large: if we fetched better animals from distant nations, there might be some sense in the preference; but to get cows from Alderney, or water-fowl from China, only to see nature degenerating round one, is a poor ambition indeed."

29. *Amusements.*

Nor was Mr. Johnson more merciful with regard to the amusements people are contented to call such: "You hunt in the morning," says he, "and crowd to the public rooms at night, and call it *diversion*; when your heart knows it is perishing with poverty of pleasures, and your wits get blunted for want of some other mind to sharpen them upon. There is in this world no real delight (excepting those of sensuality), but exchange of ideas in conversation; and whoever has once expe-

(1) [This reminds one of Caraccioli's remark, that "the only fruit in England that ripened in the open air were apples, for they were roasted."—FONNEREAU.]

rienced the full flow of London talk, when he retires to country friendships and rural sports, must either be contented to turn baby again and play with the rattle, or he will pine away like a great fish in a little pond, and die for want of his usual food."

130. *Knowledge of Life.*

"Books without the knowledge of life are useless," I have heard him say; "for what should books teach but the art of *living*? To study manners however only in coffee-houses, is more than equally imperfect: the minds of men who acquire no solid learning, and only exist on the daily forage that they pick up by running about, and snatching what drops from their neighbours as ignorant as themselves, will never ferment into any knowledge valuable or durable; but like the light wines we drink in hot countries, please for the moment though incapable of keeping. In the study of mankind much will be found to swim as froth, and much must sink as feculence, before the wine can have its effect, and become that noblest liquor which rejoices the heart, and gives vigour to the imagination."

131. *Disguise.*

Fear of what others may think, is the great cause of affectation; and he was not likely to disguise his notions out of cowardice. He hated disguise, and nobody penetrated it so readily. I showed him a letter written to a common friend, who was at some loss for the explanation of it: "Whoever wrote it," says our Doctor, "could, if he chose it, make himself understood; but 'tis the letter of an *embarrassed man, Sir*;" and so the event proved it to be.

132. *Mysteriousness.*

Mysteriousness in trifles offended him on every side: "it commonly ended in guilt," he said; "for

those who begin by concealment of innocent things, will soon have something to hide which they dare not bring to light." He therefore encouraged an openness of conduct, in women particularly, "who," he observed, "were often led away when children, by their delight and power of surprising."

133. *Superfluous Cunning. — Conferring Favours.*

He recommended, on something like the same principle, that when one person meant to serve another, he should not go about it slily, or, as we say, underhand, out of a false idea of delicacy, to surprise one's friend with an unexpected favour; "which, ten to one," says he, "fails to oblige your acquaintance, who had some reasons against such a mode of obligation, which you might have known but for that superfluous cunning which you think an elegance.

"Oh! never be seduced by such silly pretences," continued he; "if a wench wants a good gown, do not give her a fine smelling-bottle, because that is more delicate: as I once knew a lady lend the key of her library to a poor scribbling dependant, as if she took the woman for an ostrich that could digest iron." He said, indeed, that "women were very difficult to be taught the proper manner of conferring pecuniary favours: that they always gave too much money or too little; for that they had an idea of delicacy accompanying their gifts, so that they generally rendered them either useless or ridiculous."

134. *General Sarcasms.*

He did indeed say very contemptuous things of our sex; but was exceedingly angry when I told Miss Reynolds that he said, "It was well managed of some one to leave his affairs in the hands of his wife, because, in matters of business," said he, "no woman stops at integrity." This was I think, the only sentence I

ever observed him solicitous to explain away after he had uttered it.

He was not at all displeased at the recollection of a sarcasm thrown on a whole profession at once; when a gentleman leaving the company, somebody who sat next Dr. Johnson asked him, who he was? "I cannot exactly tell you, Sir," replied he, "and I would be loath to speak ill of any person who I do not know deserves it, but I am afraid he is an *attorney*." He did not however encourage general satire, and for the most part professed himself to feel directly contrary to Dr. Swift; "who," says he, "hates the world, though he loves John and Robert, and certain individuals." Johnson said always, that "the world was well constructed, but that the particular people disgraced the elegance and beauty of the general fabric."

135. *Needle-work.*

Needle-work had a strenuous approver in Dr. Johnson, who said, that "one of the great felicities of female life, was the general consent of the world, that they might amuse themselves with petty occupations, which contributed to the lengthening their lives, and preserving their minds in a state of sanity." "A man cannot hem a pocket-handkerchief," said a lady of quality to him one day, "and so he runs mad, and torments his family and friends." The expression struck him exceedingly; and when one acquaintance grew troublesome, and another unhealthy, he used to quote Lady Frances's (1) observation, that "a man cannot hem a pocket-handkerchief."

136. "*Nice People.*"

The nice people found no mercy from Mr. Johnson; such I mean as can dine only at four o'clock, who can-

(1) Lady Frances Burgoyne, daughter of the last Lord Halifax. — C.

not bear to be waked at an unusual hour, or miss a stated meal without inconvenience. *He* had no such prejudices himself, and with difficulty forgave them in another. "Delicacy does not surely consist," says he, "in impossibility to be pleased, and that is false dignity indeed which is content to depend upon others."

137. *Conversation.*

The saying of the old philosopher, who observes, that "he who wants least is most like the gods, who want nothing," was a favourite sentence with Dr. Johnson; who on his own part required less attendance, sick or well, than ever I saw any human creature. Conversation was all he required to make him happy; and when he would have tea made at two o'clock in the morning, it was only that there might be a certainty of detaining his companions round him. On that principle it was that he preferred winter to summer, when the heat of the weather gave people an excuse to stroll about, and walk for pleasure in the shade, while he wished to sit still on a chair, and chat day after day, till somebody proposed a drive in the coach; and that was the most delicious moment of his life. "But the carriage must stop sometime," as he said, "and the people would come home at last;" so his pleasure was of short duration.

138. *Love of a Coach.*

I asked him why he doated on a coach so? and received for answer, that "in the first place, the company was shut in with him *there;* and could not escape, as out of a room: in the next place, he heard all that was said in a carriage, where it was my turn to be deaf:" and very impatient was he at my occasional difficulty of hearing. On this account he wished to travel all over the world; for the very act of going forward was delightful to him, and he gave himself no

concern about accidents, which he said never happened: nor did the running away of the horses on the edge of a precipice between Vernon and St. Denys in France convince him to the contrary; "for nothing came of it," he said, "except that Mr. Thrale leaped out of the carriage into a chalk-pit, and then came up again, looking *as white!*" When the truth was, all their lives were saved by the greatest providence ever exerted in favour of three human creatures; and the part Mr. Thrale took from desperation was the likeliest thing in the world to produce broken limbs and death.

139. *Fear.*

Fear was indeed a sensation to which Mr. Johnson was an utter stranger, excepting when some sudden apprehensions seized him that he was going to die; and even then he kept all his wits about him, to express the most humble and pathetic petitions to the Almighty: and when the first paralytic stroke took his speech from him, he instantly set about composing a prayer in Latin, at once to deprecate God's mercy, to satisfy himself that his mental powers remained unimpaired, and to keep them in exercise, that they might not perish by permitted stagnation. (1)

When one day he had at my house taken tincture of antimony instead of emetic wine, for a vomit, he was himself the person to direct us what to do for him, and managed with as much coolness and deliberation, as if he had been prescribing for an indifferent person.

Though on another occasion, when he had lamented in the most piercing terms his approaching dissolution, and conjured me solemnly to tell him what I thought, while Sir Richard Jebb was perpetually on the road to Streatham, and Mr. Johnson seemed to think himself neglected if the physician left him for an hour only, I made him a steady, but as I thought a very gentle

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 223.]

harangue, in which I confirmed all that the Doctor had been saying, how no present danger could be expected; but that his age and continued ill health must naturally accelerate the arrival of that hour which can be escaped by none: "And this," says Johnson, rising in great anger, "is the voice of female friendship, I suppose, when the hand of the hangman would be softer."

Another day, when he was ill, and exceedingly low-spirited, and persuaded that death was not far distant, I appeared before him in a dark-coloured gown, which his bad sight, and worse apprehensions, made him mistake for an iron-grey. "Why do you delight," said he, "thus to thicken the gloom of misery that surrounds me? Is not here sufficient accumulation of horror without anticipated mourning?" "This is not mourning, Sir," said I, drawing the curtain, that the light might fall upon the silk, and show it was a purple mixed with green. "Well, well," replied he, changing his voice, "you little creatures should never wear those sort of clothes however; they are unsuitable in every way. What! have not all insects gay colours?" I relate these instances chiefly to show that the fears of death itself could not suppress his wit, his sagacity, or his temptation to sudden resentment.

140. *Don Quixote.*

"Alas, Madam!" said he, one day, "how few books are there of which one ever can possibly arrive at the *last* page! Was there ever yet any thing written by mere man that was wished longer by its readers, excepting Don Quixote, Robinson Crusoe, and the Pilgrim's Progress?" After Homer's Iliad, Mr. Johnson confessed that the work of Cervantes was the greatest in the world, speaking of it I mean as a book of entertainment.

141. *French Literature.*

Dr. Johnson was a great reader of French literature, and delighted exceedingly in Boileau's works. Molière I think he had hardly sufficient taste of; and he used to condemn me for preferring La Bruyère to the Duc de Rochefoucault, "who," he said, "was the only *gentleman* writer who wrote like a professed author."

142. *Life of a Sailor.*

"The life of a sailor was also a continued scene of danger and exertion," he said, "and the manner in which time was spent on shipboard would make all who saw a cabin envy a gaol." The roughness of the language used on board a man-of-war, where he passed a week on a visit to Captain Knight, disgusted him terribly. He asked an officer what some place was called and received for answer, that it was where the loplolly man kept his loplolly: a reply, he considered, not unjustly, as disrespectful, gross, and ignorant; for though I have been led to mention Dr. Johnson's tenderness towards *poor* people, I do not wish to mislead my readers, and make them think he had any delight in *mean* manners or coarse expressions.

143. *Dress.*

Even dress itself, when it resembled that of the vulgar, offended him exceedingly; and when he had condemned me many times for not adorning my children with more show than I thought useful or elegant, I presented a little girl to him who came o'visiting one evening covered with shining ornaments, to see if he would approve of the appearance she made. When they were gone home, "Well, Sir," said I, "how did you like little miss? I hope she was *fine* enough." "It was the finery of a beggar," said he, "and you know it was; she looked like a native of Cow Lane dressed up to be carried to Bartholomew fair."

His reprimand to another lady for crossing her little child's handkerchief before, and by that operation dragging down its head oddly and unintentionally, was on the same principle. "It is the beggar's fear of cold," said he, "that prevails over such parents, and so they pull the poor thing's head down, and give it the look of a baby that plays about Westminster Bridge, while the mother sits shivering in a *niche*."

It was indeed astonishing how he *could* remark such minuteness with a sight so miserably imperfect; but no accidental position of a riband escaped him, so nice was his observation, and so rigorous his demands of propriety. When I went with him to Lichfield, and came down stairs to breakfast at the inn, my dress did not please him, and he made me alter it entirely before he would stir a step with us about the town, saying most satirical things concerning the appearance I made in a riding-habit; and adding, "'Tis very strange that such eyes as yours cannot discern propriety of dress: if I had a sight only half as good, I think I should see to the centre."

My compliances, however, were of little worth: what really surprised me was the victory he gained over a lady little accustomed to contradiction, who had dressed herself for church at Streatham one Sunday morning in a manner he did not approve, and to whom he said such sharp and pungent things concerning her hat, her gown, &c. that she hastened to change them, and returning quite another figure received his applause, and thanked him for his reproofs, much to the amazement of her husband, who could scarcely believe his own ears.

Another lady, whose accomplishments he never denied, came to our house one day covered with diamonds, feathers, &c., and he did not seem inclined to chat with her as usual. I asked him why? when the company was gone. "Why; her head looked so like that of a

woman who shows puppets," said he, "and her voice so confirmed the fancy, that I could not bear her to-day; when she wears a large cap, I can talk to her."

When the ladies wore lace trimmings to their clothes, he expressed his contempt of the reigning fashion in these terms: — "A Brussels trimming is like bread sauce," said he, "it takes away the glow of colour from the gown, and gives you nothing instead of it; but sauce was invented to heighten the flavour of our food, and trimming is an ornament to the manteau, or it is nothing. Learn," said he, "that there is propriety or impropriety in every thing, how slight soever, and get at the general principles of dress and of behaviour; if you then transgress them, you will at least know that they are not observed."

144. *Mrs. Piozzi's Account of her Rupture with Johnson.*

All these exactnesses in a man who was nothing less than exact himself, made him extremely impracticable as an inmate, though most instructive as a companion, and useful as a friend. Mr. Thrale, too, could sometimes overrule his rigidity, by saying coldly, "There, there, now we have had enough for one lecture, Dr. Johnson; we will not be upon education any more till after dinner, if you please," — or some such speech: but when there was nobody to restrain his dislikes, it was extremely difficult to find any body with whom he could converse, without living always on the verge of a quarrel, or of something too like a quarrel to be pleasing.

I came into the room, for example, one evening, where he and a gentleman, whose abilities we all respect exceedingly, were sitting; a lady who walked in two minutes before me had blown 'em both into a flame, by whispering something to Mr. Seward, which he endeavoured to explain away, so as not to affront the

Doctor, whose suspicions were all alive. "And have a care, Sir," said he, just as I came in; "the Old Lion will not bear to be tickled." The other was pale with rage, the Lady (1) wept at the confusion she had caused, and I could only say, with Lady Macbeth,—

> "You've displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting
> With most admired disorder."

Such accidents, however, occurred too often, and I was forced to take advantage of my lost lawsuit, and plead inability of purse to remain longer in London or its vicinage. I had been crossed in my intentions of going abroad, and found it convenient, for every reason of health, peace, and pecuniary circumstances, to retire to Bath, where I knew Mr. Johnson would not follow me, and where I could for that reason command some little portion of time for my own use; a thing impossible while I remained at Streatham or at London, as my hours, carriage, and servants had long been at his command, who would not rise in the morning till twelve o'clock perhaps, and oblige me to make breakfast for him till the bell rang for dinner, though much displeased if the toilet was neglected, and though much of the time we passed together was spent in blaming or deriding, very justly, my neglect of economy, and waste of that money which might make many families happy.

The original reason of our connection, his *particularly disordered health and spirits*, had been long at an end, and he had no other ailments than old age and general infirmity, which every professor of medicine was ardently zealous and generally attentive to palliate, and to contribute all in their power for the prolongation of a

(1) The lady's name was Streatfield, as Mr. Seward told me. She was very handsome, and a good scholar; for she understood Greek. She was piqued at Mr. Seward's paying more attention to Dr. Johnson than to her; and on coming in, whispered, "how his *bark* sat on his stomach;" alluding to the roughness which she supposed was in Dr. Johnson's conversation. — MALONE MS.

life so valuable. Veneration for his virtue, reverence for his talents, delight in his conversation, and habitual endurance of a yoke my husband first put upon me, and of which he contentedly bore his share for sixteen or seventeen years, made me go on so long with Mr. Johnson; but the perpetual confinement I will own to have been terrifying in the first years of our friendship, and irksome in the last; nor could I pretend to support it without help, when my coadjutor was no more.

To the assistance we gave him, the shelter our house afforded to his uneasy fancies, and to the pains we took to sooth or repress them, the world perhaps is indebted for the three political pamphlets, the new edition and correction of his Dictionary, and for the Poets' Lives, which he would scarce have lived, I think, and kept his faculties entire, to have written, had not incessant care been exerted at the time of his first coming to be our constant guest in the country; and several times after that, when he found himself particularly oppressed with diseases incident to the most vivid and fervent imaginations. I shall for ever consider it as the greatest honour which could be conferred on any one, to have been the confidential friend of Dr. Johnson's health; and to have in some measure, with Mr. Thrale's assistance, saved from distress at least, if not from worse, a mind great beyond the comprehension of common mortals, and good beyond all hope of imitation from perishable beings.

145. *Character of Johnson.*

When Mr. Thrale built the new library at Streatham, and hung up over the books the portraits of his favourite friends, that of Dr. Johnson was last finished, and closed the number. It was almost impossible *not* to make verses on such an accidental combination of circumstances, so I made the following ones: but as a Character written in verse will, for the most part, be

found imperfect as a character, I have therefore written a prose one, with which I mean, not to complete, but to conclude these Anecdotes of the best and wisest man that ever came within the reach of my personal acquaintance, and I think I might venture to add, that of all or any of my readers: —

" Gigantic in knowledge, in virtue, in strength,
Our company closes with Johnson at length;
So the Greeks from the cavern of Polypheme pass'd
When wisest, and greatest, Ulysses came last.
To his comrades contemptuous, we see him look down,
On their wit and their worth with a general frown.
Since from Science' proud tree the rich fruit he receives,
Who could shake the whole trunk while they turn'd a few
leaves.
His piety pure, his morality nice —
Protector of virtue, and terror of vice;
In these features Religion's firm champion display'd,
Shall make infidels fear for a modern crusade.
While th' inflammable temper, the positive tongue,
Too conscious of right for endurance of wrong,
We suffer from Johnson, contented to find,
That some notice we gain from so noble a mind;
And pardon our hurts, since so often we 've found
The balm of instruction pour'd into the wound.
'Tis thus for its virtues the chemists extol
Pure rectified spirit, sublime alcohol;
From noxious putrescence, preservative pure,
A cordial in health, and in sickness a cure;
But exposed to the sun, taking fire at his rays,
Burns bright to the bottom, and ends in a blaze."

It is usual, I know not why, when a Character is given, to begin with a description of the person; that which contained the soul of Mr. Johnson deserves to be particularly described. His stature was remarkably high, and his limbs exceedingly large: his strength was more than common, I believe, and his activity had been greater, I have heard, than such a form gave one reason

to expect: his features were strongly marked, and his countenance particularly rugged; though the original complexion had certainly been fair, a circumstance somewhat unusual: his sight was near, and otherwise imperfect; yet his eyes, though of a light grey colour, were so wild, so piercing, and at times so fierce, that fear was, I believe, the first emotion in the hearts of all his beholders. His mind was so comprehensive, that no language but that he used could have expressed its contents; and so ponderous was his language, that sentiments less lofty and less solid than his were, would have been encumbered, not adorned by it.

Mr. Johnson was not intentionally, however, a pompous converser; and though he was accused of using big words, as they are called, it was only when little ones would not express his meaning as clearly, or when perhaps the elevation of the thought would have been disgraced by a dress less superb. He used to say, that "the size of a man's understanding might always be justly measured by his mirth;" and his own was never contemptible. He would laugh at a stroke of genuine humour, or sudden sally of odd absurdity, as heartily and freely as I ever yet saw any man; and though the jest was often such as few felt besides himself,* yet his laugh was irresistible, and was observed immediately to produce that of the company, not merely from the notion that it was proper to laugh when he did, but purely out of want of power to forbear it. He was no enemy to splendour of apparel or pomp of equipage — "Life," he would say, "is barren enough surely with all her trappings; let us therefore be cautious how we strip her." In matters of still higher moment he once observed, when speaking on the subject of sudden innovation, — "He who plants a forest may doubtless cut down a hedge; yet I could wish, methinks, that even he would wait till he sees his young plants grow."

With regard to common occurrences, Mr. Johnson

had, when I first knew him, looked on the still-shifting scenes of life till he was weary; for as a mind slow in its own nature, or unenlivened by information, will contentedly read in the same book for twenty times perhaps, the very act of reading it being more than half the business, and every period being at every reading better understood; while a mind more active or more skilful to comprehend its meaning is made sincerely sick at the second perusal; so a soul like his, acute to discern the truth, vigorous to embrace, and powerful to retain it, soon sees enough of the world's dull prospect, which at first, like that of the sea, pleases by its extent but soon, like that, too, fatigues from its uniformity; a calm and a storm being the only variations that the nature of either will admit.

Of Mr. Johnson's erudition the world has been the judge, and we who produce each a score of his sayings, as proofs of that wit which in him was inexhaustible, resemble travellers who, having visited Delhi or Golconda, bring home each a handful of Oriental pearl to evince the riches of the Great Mogul. May the public condescend to accept my *ill-strung* selection with patience at least, remembering only that they are relics of him who was great on all occasions, and, like a cube in architecture, you beheld him on each side, and his size still appeared undiminished.

As his purse was ever open to almsgiving, so was his heart tender to those who wanted relief, and his soul susceptible of gratitude, and of every kind impression; yet though he had refined his sensibility, he had not endangered his quiet, by encouraging in himself a solicitude about trifles, which he treated with the contempt they deserve.

It was well enough known before these sheets were published, that Mr. Johnson had a roughness in his manner which subdued the saucy, and terrified the meek: this was, when I knew him, the prominent part

of a character which few durst venture to approach so nearly; and which was, for that reason, in many respects, grossly and frequently mistaken; and it was perhaps peculiar to him, that the lofty consciousness of his own superiority, which animated his looks, and raised his voice in conversation, cast likewise an impenetrable veil over him when he said nothing. His talk therefore had commonly the complexion of arrogance, his silence of superciliousness. He was, however, seldom inclined to be silent when any moral or literary question was started: and it was on such occasions, that, like the sage in Rasselas, he spoke, and attention watched his lips; he reasoned, and conviction closed his periods: if poetry was talked of, his quotations were the readiest; and had he not been eminent for more solid and brilliant qualities, mankind would have united to extol his extraordinary memory. His manner of repeating deserves to be described, though, at the same time, it defeats all power of description; but whoever once heard him repeat an ode of Horace, would be long before they could endure to hear it repeated by another.

His equity in giving the character of living acquaintance ought not undoubtedly to be omitted in his own, whence partiality and prejudice were totally excluded, and truth alone presided in his tongue: a steadiness of conduct the more to be commended as no man had stronger likings or aversions. His veracity was, indeed, from the most trivial to the most solemn occasions, strict, even to severity; he scorned to embellish a story with fictitious circumstances, which, he used to say, took off from its real value. "A story," says Johnson, "should be a specimen of life and manners; but if the surrounding circumstances are false, as it is no more a representation of reality, it is no longer worthy our attention."

For the rest,—that beneficence which, during his life, increased the comforts of so many, may after his

death be perhaps ungratefully forgotten; but that piety which dictated the serious papers in the Rambler, will be for ever remembered; for ever, I think, revered. That ample repository of religious truth, moral wisdom, and accurate criticism, breathes indeed the genuine emanations of its great author's mind, expressed too in a style so natural to him, and so much like his common mode of conversing, that I was myself but little astonished when he told me, that he had scarcely read over one of those inimitable essays before they went to the press.

I will add one or two peculiarities more, before I lay down my pen. Though at an immeasurable distance from content in the contemplation of his own uncouth form and figure, he did not like another man much the less for being a coxcomb. I mentioned two friends who were particularly fond of looking at themselves in a glass: "They do not surprise me at all by so doing," said Johnson: "they see, reflected in that glass, men who have risen from almost the lowest situations in life; one to enormous riches, the other to every thing this world can give — rank, fame, and fortune. They see, likewise, men who have merited their advancement by the exertion and improvement of those talents which God had given them; and I see not why they should avoid the mirror."

The other singularity I promised to record is this: that though a man of obscure birth himself, his partiality to people of family was visible on every occasion; his zeal for subordination warm even to bigotry; his hatred to innovation, and reverence for the old feudal times, apparent, whenever any possible manner of showing them occurred. I have spoken of his piety, his charity, and his truth, the enlargement of his heart, and the delicacy of his sentiments; and when I search for shadow to my portrait, none can I find but what was formed by pride, differently modified as different occa-

sions showed it; yet never was pride so purified as Johnson's, at once from meanness and from vanity. The mind of this man was indeed expanded beyond the common limits of human nature, and stored with such variety of knowledge, that I used to think it resembled a royal pleasure-ground, where every plant, of every name and nation, flourished in the full perfection of their powers; and where, though lofty woods and falling cataracts first caught the eye, and fixed the earliest attention of beholders, yet neither the trim parterre nor the pleasing shrubbery, nor even the antiquated evergreens, were denied a place in some fit corner of the happy valley.

[*The following Anecdotes, Opinions, and Reflections are from the Collection of Dr. Johnson's Letters, published by Mrs. Piozzi, in* 1788.]

146. *Domestic Tragedies.*

What is nearest us touches us most. The passions rise higher at domestic than at imperial tragedies.

147. *Calamities.*

When any calamity is suffered, the first thing to be remembered is, how much has been escaped.

148. *Grief.*

Grief is a species of idleness, and the necessity of attention to the present preserves us, by the merciful disposition of Providence, from being lacerated and devoured by sorrow for the past.

149. *Vows.*

All unnecessary vows are folly, because they suppose a prescience of the future which has not been given us.

They are, I think, a crime, because they resign that life to chance, which God has given us to be regulated by reason; and superinduce a kind of fatuity, from which it is the great privilege of our nature to be free. I think an unlimited promise of acting by the opinion of another so wrong, that nothing, or hardly any thing, can make it right.

150. *Filial Obedience.*

Unlimited obedience is due only to the Universal Father of heaven and earth. My parents may be mad or foolish; may be wicked and malicious; may be erroneously religious, or absurdly scrupulous. I am not bound to compliance with mandates, either positive or negative, which either religion condemns or reason rejects.

There wanders about the world a wild notion, which extends over marriage more than over any other transaction. If Miss **** followed a trade, would it be said that she was bound in conscience to give or refuse credit at her father's choice? And is not marriage a thing in which she is more interested, and has therefore more right of choice? When I may suffer for my own crimes, when I may be sued for my own debts, I may judge, by parity of reason, for my own happiness.

151. *To-morrow.*

You do not tell me whither the young lovers are gone. What a life do they image in futurity! how unlike to what they are to find! But To-morrow is an old deceiver, and his cheat never grows stale.

152. *Praise and Flattery.*

The difference between praise and flattery is the same as between that hospitality that sets wine enough before the guest, and that which forces him to be drunk.

153. *Travellers and Books of Travels.*

He that wanders about the world sees new forms of human misery; and if he chances to meet an old friend, meets a face darkened by troubles. You have often heard me complain of finding myself disappointed by books of travels. I am afraid travel itself will end likewise in disappointment. One town, one country, is very like another: civilised nations have the same customs, and barbarous nations have the same nature: there are indeed minute discriminations both of places and manners, which, perhaps, are not wanting of curiosity, but which a traveller seldom stays long enough to investigate and compare. The dull utterly neglect them; the acute see a little, and supply the rest with fancy and conjecture.

154. *Use of Travelling.*

The use of travelling is to regulate imagination by reality, and, instead of thinking how things may be, to see them as they are.

155. *Principles.*

Principles can only be strong by the strength of understanding, or the cogency of religion.

156. *Dr. Cheyne. — Burton.*

"All is best," says Cheyne, "as it has been, excepting the errors of our own free will." Burton concludes his long book upon melancholy with this important precept: — "Be not solitary; be not idle." Remember Cheyne's position, and observe Burton's precept.

157. *Compliments.*

Do not make speeches to your country friends. Unusual compliments, to which there is no stated and prescriptive answer, embarrass the feeble, who know not what to say, and disgust the wise, who, knowing them to be false, suspect them to be hypocritical.

158. *Seeing Shows.*

It is easy to talk of sitting at home contented, when others are seeing or making shows. But not to have been where it is supposed that all would go if they could; to be able to say nothing when every one is talking; to have no opinion where every one is judging; to hear exclamations of rapture without power to depress; to listen to falsehoods without right to contradict, is, after all, a state of temporary inferiority, in which the mind is rather hardened by stubbornness, than supported by fortitude.

159. *Mingling with the World.*

If the world be worth winning, let us enjoy it; if it is to be despised, let us despise it by conviction. But the world is not to be despised, but as it is compared with something better. Company is in itself better than solitude, and pleasure better than indolence. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, says the moral as well as natural philosopher. By doing nothing, and by knowing nothing, no power of doing good can be obtained. He must mingle with the world that deserves to be useful. Every new scene comprises new ideas, enriches the imagination, and enlarges the powers of reason, by new topics of comparison.

160. *Disappointment.*

All pleasure preconceived and preconcerted ends in disappointment; but disappointment, when it involves neither shame nor loss, is as good as success; for it supplies as many images to the mind, and as many topics to the tongue.

161. *Bright and cloudy Days.*

Most men have their bright and their cloudy days; at least, they have days when they put their powers into act, and days when they suffer them to repose.

162. *Keeping a Diary.*

Do not remit the practice of writing down occurrences as they arise, of whatever kind, and be very punctual in annexing the dates. Chronology, you know, is the eye of history; and every man's life is of importance to himself. Do not omit painful casualties, or unpleasing passages, they make the variegation of existence; and there are many transactions, of which I will not premise, with Æneas, *et hæc olim meminisse juvabit*; — yet that remembrance which is not pleasant may be useful. There is, however, an intemperate attention to slight circumstances which is to be avoided, lest a great part of life be spent in writing the history of the rest. Every day, perhaps, has something to be noted; but in a settled and uniform course few days can have much.

163. *Camps.*

A camp, however familiarly we may speak of it, is one of the great scenes of human life. War and peace divide the business of the world. Camps are the habitations of those who conquer kingdoms, or defend them.

164. *Affliction.*

To grieve for evils is often wrong; but it is much more wrong to grieve without them. All sorrow that lasts longer than its cause is morbid, and should be shaken off as an attack of melancholy, as the forerunner of a greater evil than poverty or pain.

165. *Weariness.—Labour.—Exercise.*

Weariness is itself a temporary resolution of the nerves, and is therefore to be avoided. Labour is exercise, continued to fatigue. Exercise is labour, used only while it produces pleasure.

166. "*Nil admirari.*"

Horace says, that "*Nil admirari*" is the only thing that can make or keep a man happy. It is, with equal truth, the only thing that can keep a man honest. The desire of fame, not regulated, is as dangerous to virtue as that of money.

167. *Religious Education.*

It has happened to ———, as to many active and prosperous men, that his mind has been wholly absorbed in business, or at intervals dissolved in amusement; and habituated so long to certain modes of employment or diversion, that in the decline of life it can no more receive a new train of images, than the hand can acquire dexterity in a new mechanical operation. For this reason a religious education is so necessary. Spiritual ideas may be recollected in old age, but can hardly be acquired.

168. *Critics.*

Never let criticisms operate upon your face or your mind: it is very rarely that an author is hurt by his critics. The blaze of reputation cannot be blown out; but it often dies in the socket: a very few names may be considered as perpetual lamps that shine unconsumed.

169. *Seat in Parliament.*

It would be with great discontent that I should see Mr. Thrale decline the representation of the Borough. To sit in parliament for Southwark is the highest honour that his station permits him to attain; and his ambition to attain it is rational and laudable. I will not say that for an honest man to struggle for a vote in the legislature, at a time when honest votes are so much wanted, is absolutely a duty; but it is surely an act of virtue. The expense, if it was more, I should wish him to despise. Money is made for such purposes as this.

170. *Sorrow.*

There is no wisdom in useless and hopeless sorrow; but there is something in it so like virtue, that he who is wholly without it cannot be loved, nor will, by me at least, be thought worthy of esteem.

171. *Kindness. — Compassion.*

The world is not so unjust or unkind as it is peevishly represented. Those who deserve well seldom fail to receive from others such services as they can perform; but few have much in their power, or are so stationed as to have great leisure from their own affairs; and kindness must be commonly the exuberance of content. The wretched have no compassion; they can do good only from strong principles of duty.

172. *Anonymous Authors.*

I have been at Lichfield persecuted with solicitations to read a poem; but I sent the author word, that I would never review the work of an anonymous author: for why should I put my name in the power of one who will not trust me with his own? With this answer Lucy was satisfied; and I think it may satisfy all whom it may concern.

173. *Hyperbolical Praise.*

Do not flatter. Cool reciprocations of esteem are the great comforts of life: hyperbolical praise only corrupts the tongue of the one, and the ear of the other.

174. *Computation.*

Nothing amuses more harmlessly than computation, and nothing is oftener applicable to real business or speculative inquiries. A thousand stories which the ignorant tell, and believe, die away at once, when the computist takes them in his gripe. Cultivate in yourself a disposition to numerical inquiries: they will give

you entertainment in solitude by the practice, and reputation in public by the effect.

175. *Female Gluttony.*

Gluttony is less common among women than among men. Women commonly eat more sparingly, and are less curious in the choice of meat; but, if once you find a woman gluttonous, expect from her very little virtue. Her mind is enslaved to the lowest and grossest temptation.

176. *Nature. — Human Life.*

Take all opportunities of filling your mind with genuine scenes of nature. Description is always fallacious; at least, till you have seen realities, you cannot know it to be true. This observation might be extended to life; but life cannot be surveyed with the same safety as nature; and it is better to know vice and folly by report than by experience. A painter, says Sydney, mingled in the battle, that he might know how to paint it; but his knowledge was useless, for some mischievous sword took away his head. They whose speculation upon characters leads them too far into the world, may lose that nice sense of good and evil by which characters are to be tried. Acquaint yourself, therefore, both with the pleasing and the terrible parts of nature; but, in life, wish to know only the good.

177. *Mrs. Porter, the Tragedian.*

Mrs. Porter was so much the favourite of her time, that she was welcomed on the stage when she trod it by the help of a stick. She taught her pupils no violent graces; for she was a woman of very gentle and lady-like manners, though without much extent of knowledge, or activity of understanding.

178. *Dictionaries.*

Dictionaries are like watches; the worst is better than none, and the best cannot be expected to go quite true.

179. *Attention.*

Endeavour to reform that instability of attention which you have lately betrayed. Perhaps it is natural for those that have much within to think little on things without; but whoever lives heedlessly lives but in a mist, perpetually deceived by false appearances of the past, without any certain reliance or recollection.

180. *Initials.*

I have a letter signed S. A. Thrale. I take S. A. to be Miss Sophy: but who is bound to recollect initials? A name should be written, if not fully, yet so that it cannot be mistaken.

181. *Old Friendships.*

Those that have loved longest love best. A sudden blaze of kindness may, by a single blast of coldness, be extinguished; but that fondness which length of time has connected with many circumstances and occasions, though it may for a while be suppressed by disgust or resentment, with or without a cause, is hourly revived by accidental recollection. To those that have lived long together, every thing heard and every thing seen, recals some pleasure communicated, or some benefit conferred, some petty quarrel, or some slight endearment. Esteem of great powers, or amiable qualities newly discovered, may embroider a day or a week; but a friendship of twenty years is interwoven with the texture of life. A friend may be often found and lost; but an *old friend* never can be found, and nature has provided that he cannot easily be lost.

182. *Death.*

The frequency of death, to those who look upon it in the leisure of Arcadia, is very dreadful. We all know what it should teach us; let us all be diligent to learn.

183. *Incommunicative Taciturnity.*

Incommunicative taciturnity neither imparts nor invites friendship, but reposes on a stubborn sufficiency, self-centered, and neglects the interchange of that social officiousness by which we are habitually endeared to one another. They that mean to make no use of friends will be at little trouble to gain them; and to be without friendship is to be without one of the first comforts of our present state. To have no assistance from other minds, in resolving doubts, in appeasing scruples, in balancing deliberations, is a very wretched destitution.

184. *Purposes.*

Life, to be worthy of a rational being, must be always in progression: we must always purpose to do more or better than in past time. The mind is enlarged and elevated by mere purposes, though they end as they begin, by airy contemplation. We compare and judge, though we do not practise.

185. *Visitors.* — *Domestic Companions.*

Visitors are no proper companions in the chamber of sickness. They come when I could sleep or read; they stay till I am weary; they force me to attend when my mind calls for relaxation, and to speak when my powers will hardly actuate my tongue. The amusements and consolations of languor and depression are conferred by familiar and domestic companions, which can be visited or called at will, and can occasionally be quitted or dismissed; who do not obstruct accommodation by ceremony, or destroy indolence by awakening effort.

186. *Hannah More's "Bas Bleu."*

Miss More has written a poem called "Le Bas Bleu," which is, in my opinion, a very great performance. It wanders about in manuscript, and surely will soon find its way to Bath.

187. *Attention and Respect.*

I have now (Dec. 31. 1783) in the house pheasant, venison, turkey, and ham, all unbought. Attention and respect give pleasure, however late or however useless. But they are not useless when they are late: it is reasonable to rejoice, as the day declines, to find that it has been spent with the approbation of mankind.

188. *Talk of the Sick.*

The first talk of the sick is commonly of themselves; but if they talk of nothing else, they cannot complain if they are soon left without an audience.

189. *"The Rambler," in Russian.*

The chaplain of the factory at Petersburg relates, that "The Rambler" is now, by the command of the Empress, translating into Russian (1); and has promised when it is printed to send me a copy. Grant, O Lord! that all who shall read my pages may become more obedient to thy laws; and when the wretched writer shall appear before thee, extend thy mercy to him, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

190. *Confidence with respect to Futurity.*

I never thought confidence with respect to futurity any part of the character of a brave, a wise, or a good man. Bravery has no place where it can avail nothing; wisdom impresses strongly the consciousness of those

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 274.]

faults, of which it is itself perhaps an aggravation; and goodness, always wishing to be better, and imputing every deficience to criminal negligence, and every fault to voluntary corruption, never dares to suppose the condition of forgiveness fulfilled, nor what is wanting on the crime supplied by penitence. This is the state of the best; but what must be the condition of him whose heart will not suffer him to rank himself among the best, or among the good? Such must be his dread of the approaching trial, as will leave him little attention to the opinion of those whom he is leaving for ever; and the serenity that is not felt, it can be no virtue to feign.

191. "*Dying with a Grace.*"

Write to me no more about *dying with a grace!* When you feel what I have felt in approaching eternity, in fear of soon hearing the sentence of which there is no revocation, you will know the folly: my wish is, that you may know it sooner. The distance between the grave and the remotest point of human longevity, is but very little; and of that little no path is certain. You knew all this, and I thought that I knew it too; but I know it now with a new conviction. May that new conviction not be vain!

192. "*Irene.*" — "*Cato.*" — "*Fair Penitent.*"

Dr. Johnson was no complainer of ill. I never heard him even lament the disregard shown to "Irene," which, however, was a violent favourite with him; and much was he offended when, having asked me once, "What single scene afforded me most pleasure of all our tragic drama," I, little thinking of *his* play's existence, named, perhaps with hasty impropriety, "the dialogue between Syphax and Juba, in Addison's 'Cato.'" "Nay, nay," replied he, "if you are for declamation, I hope my two ladies have the better of them all." This piece, however lay dormant many years, *shelfed* (in the manager's

phrase) from the time Mr. Peter Garrick presented it first on Fleetwood's table, to the hour when his brother David obtained due influence on the theatre, on which it crawled through nine nights, *supported by cordials*, but never obtained popular applause. I asked him then to name a better scene; he pitched on that between Horatio and Lothario, in Rowe's "Fair Penitent;" but Mr. Murphy showed him afterwards that it was borrowed from Massinger, and had not the merit of originality.

193. *Profession of an Actor.—Garrick.—Mrs. Siddons.*

It is well known that Johnson despised the profession of an actor. When Garrick was talked of as candidate for admission into the Literary Club, many years ago,—"If he does apply," says the Doctor to Mr. Thrale, "I'll blackball him." "Who, Sir? Mr. Garrick, your friend, your companion,—blackball him!" "Why, Sir, I love my little David dearly; better than all or any of his flatterers do; but surely one ought to sit in a society like ours,—

'Unelbow'd by a gamester, pimp, or player.'"

In spite of this ill-founded contempt, he persuaded himself to treat Mrs. Siddons with great politeness; and said, when she called on him at Bolt Court, and Frank could not immediately provide her with a chair, "You see, Madam, wherever *you* go there are no *seats* to be got."

194. *Johnson's last Illness and Death.*

Dr. Johnson was once angry with his friend Dr. Taylor of Ashbourne, for recommending to him a degree of temperance, by which alone his life could have been saved, and recommending it in his own unaltered phrase too, with praiseworthy intentions to impress it more forcibly. This quarrel, however, if quarrel it might be called, which was mere sullenness on one side, and sorrow on the other, soon healed of itself, mutual

reproaches having never been permitted to widen the breach, and supply, as is the common practice among coarser disputants, the original and perhaps almost forgotten cause of dispute. After some weeks, Johnson sent to request the sight of his old companion, whose feeble health held him away for some weeks more, and who, when he came, urged that feebleness as an excuse for appearing no sooner at the call of friendship in distress; but Johnson, who was then, as he expressed it, not sick but dying, told him a story of a lady, who many years before lay expiring in such tortures as that cruel disease, a cancer, naturally produces, and begged the conversation of her earliest intimate to soothe the incredible sufferings of her body, and relieve the approaching terrors of her mind: but what was the friend's apology for absence? "Oh, my dear," said she, "I have really been so plagued and so pained of late by a nasty whitlow, that indeed it was quite impossible for me till to-day to attend my Lucy's call." I think this was not more than two days before his dissolution.

Some Lichfield friends fancied that he had half a mind to die where he was born, but that the hope of being buried in Westminster Abbey overpowered the inclination; but Mr. Johnson loved London, and many people then in London, whom I doubt not he sincerely wished to see again, particularly Mr. Sastres, for whose person some of his letters manifest a strong affection, and of whose talents I have often heard him speak with great esteem. That gentleman has told me, that his fears of death ended with his hope of recovery, and that the latter days of his life passed in calm resignation to God's will, and a firm trust in his mercy.

He burned many letters in the last week, I am told and those written by his mother drew from him a flood of tears, when the paper they were written on was all consumed. Mr. Sastres saw him cast a melancholy

look upon their ashes, which he took up and examined, to see if a word was still legible. Nobody has ever mentioned what became of Miss Aston's letters, though he once told me himself, they should be the last papers he would destroy, and added these lines with a very faltering voice: —

> "Then from his closing eye thy form shall part,
> And the last pang shall tear thee from his heart;
> Life's idle business at one gasp be o'er,
> The Muse forgot, and thou beloved no more."

195. *Rape of the Lock.*

Dr. Johnson says of Pope, "He has a few double rhymes; but always, I think, unsuccessfully, except once in the Rape of the Lock."

> "The meeting points the fatal lock dissever
> From the fair head — for ever and for ever," —

was the couplet Johnson meant, for I asked him.

196. *Streatham Gallery.*

The following is a list of the prices which the Streatham collection of portraits, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, brought at auction in May, 1816: —

	£	s.	d.	
Lord Sandys -	- 36	15	0	Lady Downshire; his heir.
Lord Lyttelton	- 43	1	0	Mr. Lyttelton; his son.
Mrs. Piozzi -	- 81	18	0	S. Boddington, Esq; a rich merchant.
Goldsmith -	- 133	7	0	Duke of Bedford.
Sir J. Reynolds	- 128	2	0	R. Sharp, Esq., of Park Lane.
Sir R. Chambers	- 84	0	0	Lady Chambers; his widow.
David Garrick	- 183	15	0	Dr. Charles Burney, Greenwich.
Baretti -	- 31	10	0	— Stewart, Esq.: I know not who.
Dr. Burney -	- 84	0	0	Dr. C. Burney, of Greenwich, his son.
Edmund Burke	- 252	0	0	R. Sharp, Esq.
Dr. Johnson	- 378	0	0	Watson Taylor, Esq. — H. L. P." (1)

(1) [Dr. Johnson's — infinitely the finest of these portraits, as a work of art, and second not even to Mr. Burke's as an object of national interest — passed, at Mr Watson Taylor's sale, into the hands of Sir Robert Peel.]

PART II.

ANECDOTES AND SAYINGS OF JOHNSON, SELECTED FROM HAWKINS. (1)

197. *Portable Books.*

DR. JOHNSON used to say, that no man read long together with a folio on his table. "Books," said he, "that you may carry to the fire, and hold readily in your hand, are the most useful after all." He would say, "such books form the mass of general and easy reading." He was a great friend to books like the French "*Esprits d'un tel;*" for example, "*Beauties of Watts,*" &c. &c.: "at which," said he, "a man will often look and be tempted to go on, when he would have been frightened at books of a larger size, and of a more erudite appearance.

198. *Conversation.*

He had a great opinion of the knowledge procured by conversation with intelligent and ingenious persons. His first question concerning such as had that character was ever, "What is his conversation?"

(1) [Sir John Hawkins published, in 1787, his Life of Johnson; and, in the same year, superintended an edition of the Doctor's Works, in eleven volumes octavo. From these publications the present selection has been made.]

199. *Christian Religion.*

The Duke of * * * once said to Johnson, "that every religion had a certain degree of morality in it." "Ay, my lord," answered he, "but the Christian religion alone puts it on its proper basis."

200. *Learned Ladies.* — *Mrs. Carter.*

He used to say something tantamount to this: When a woman affects learning, she makes a rivalry between the two sexes for the same accomplishments, which ought not to be, their provinces being different. Milton said before him,

> "For contemplation he and valour form'd,
> For softness she and sweet attractive grace."

And upon hearing a lady of his acquaintance commended for her learning, he said, "A man is in general better pleased when he has a good dinner upon his table than when his wife talks Greek. My old friend, Mrs. Carter," he added, "could make a pudding as well as translate Epictetus from the Greek, and work a handkerchief as well as compose a poem." He thought, however, that she was too reserved in conversation upon subjects she was so eminently able to converse upon, which was occasioned by her modesty and fear of giving offence.

201. *Rising in the World.* — *Foote.*

When some one was lamenting Foote's unlucky fate in being kicked, in Dublin, Johnson said he was glad of it. "He is rising in the world," said he: "when he was in England, no one thought it worth while to kick him."

202. *Precepts and Practice.*

To a person, who once said he paid little regard to those writers on religion or morality whose practice corresponded not with their precepts, he imputed a want

of knowledge of mankind; saying, it was gross ignorance in him not to know, that good principles and an irregular life were consistent with each other.

203. *Volubility.*

Of a member of parliament, who, after having harangued for some hours in the House of Commons, came into a company where Johnson was, and endeavoured to talk him down, he said, "This man has a pulse in his tongue."

204. *Equality — Mrs. Macaulay.*

Dr. Johnson and Dr. Sumner, of Harrow, were dining one day, with many other persons, at Mrs. Macaulay's. (1) She had talked a long time at dinner about the natural equality of mankind. Johnson, when she had finished her harangue, rose up from the table, and with great solemnity of countenance, and a bow to the ground, said to the servant, who was waiting behind his chair, "Mr. John, pray be seated in my place, and permit me to wait upon you in my turn: your mistress says, you hear, that we are all equal."

205. *Divine Service. — Dr. Dodd.*

"I am convinced," said he to a friend, "I ought to be present at divine service (2) more frequently than I am; but the provocations given by ignorant and affected preachers, too often disturb the mental calm which otherwise would succeed to prayer. I am apt to whisper to myself on such occasions, How can this illiterate fellow dream of fixing attention, after we have been listening to the sublimest truths, conveyed in the most chaste and exalted language, throughout a liturgy which must be regarded as the genuine offspring of piety impregnated by wisdom! Take notice, however, though

(1) See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 289., Vol. II. p. 238., and Vol. VI. p. 198. — C.

(2) [See *antè*, Vol VI. p. 281.]

I make this confession respecting myself, I do not mean to recommend the fastidiousness that sometimes leads me to exchange congregational for solitary worship." He was at Streatham church when Dodd's first application to him was made, and went out of his pew immediately, to write an answer to the letter he had received. Afterwards, when he related this circumstance, he added, "I hope I shall be pardoned, if once I deserted the service of God for that of man."

206. *Physicians.*

Johnson obeyed that precept of Scripture which exhorts us to honour the physician, and would frequently say of those of his own country, that they did more good to mankind, without a prospect of reward, than any profession of men whatever.

207. *Romantic Virtue.*

Dr. Johnson said, he always mistrusted romantic virtue, as thinking it founded on no fixed principle.

208. *Schoolmasters.*

Speaking of schoolmasters, he used to say they were worse than the Egyptian taskmasters of old. "No boy," says he, "is sure any day he goes to school to escape a whipping. How can the schoolmaster tell what the boy has really forgotten, and what he has neglected to learn; what he has had no opportunities of learning, and what he has taken no pains to get at the knowledge of? yet, for any of these, however difficult they may be, the boy is obnoxious to punishment."

209. *Mystery.*

He used to say that where secrecy or mystery began vice or roguery was not far off.

210. "*Derange.*"

He would not allow the verb *derange*, a word at present much in use, to be an English word. "Sir," said a gentleman who had some pretensions to literature, "I have seen it in a book." "Not in a *bound* book,' said Johnson; "*disarrange* is the word we ought to use instead of it." (1)

211. *Hugh Kelly.*

When some one asked him whether they should introduce Hugh Kelly, the author, to him — "No, Sir," says he, "I never desire to converse with a man who has written more than he has read:" yet when his play was acted for the benefit of his widow, Johnson furnished a prologue.

212. *The Early Puritans.*

Of the early Puritans, he thought their want of learning was atoned for by their skill in the Scriptures, and the holiness of their lives; and, to justify his opinion of them and their writings, he once cited to me a saying of Howell, in one of his letters, that to make a man a complete Christian, he must have the works of a Papist, the words of a Puritan, and the faith of a Protestant.

213. *Happiness.*

He thought the happiest life was that of a man of business, with some literary pursuits for his amusement; and that, in general, no one could be virtuous or happy that was not completely employed.

214. *George Psalmanazar.*

He had never, he said, seen the close of the life of any one that he wished so much his own to resemble, as

(1) Even so late as the year 1795, a writer in the British Critic censured, as a gallicism, Mr. Burke's use of *derange* for *disarrange*. — C.

that of Psalmanazar [1] for its purity and devotion. He told many anecdotes of him; and said he was supposed, by his accent, to have been a Gascon; but that he spoke English with the city accent, and coarse enough. He for some years spent his evenings at a public-house near Old Street, where many persons went to talk with him. When Dr. Johnson was asked whether he ever contradicted Psalmanazar, " I should as soon," said he, " have thought of contradicting a bishop:" so high did he hold his character in the latter part of his life. When he was asked whether he ever mentioned Formosa before him, he said, " he was afraid to mention even China."

215. *Improvement.*

Johnson was in the habit of visiting Psalmanazar, and would frequently adjourn with him from his lodgings to a neighbouring alehouse, and, in the common room, converse with him on subjects of importance. In one of these conversations, Johnson took occasion to remark on the human mind, that it had a necessary tendency to improvement, and that it would frequently anticipate instruction, and enable ingenious minds to acquire knowledge. " Sir," said a stranger that overheard him, " that I deny: I am a tailor, and have had many apprentices, but never one that could make a coat, till I had taken great pains in teaching him."

216. *Garrick's Enunciation.*

He assumed a right of correcting Garrick's enunciation, and, by an instance, convinced him that it was sometimes erroneous. " You often," said Johnson, " mistake the emphatical word of a sentence." " Give me an instance," said Garrick. " I cannot," answered Johnson, " recollect one; but repeat the Seventh Commandment." Garrick pronounced it — " Thou *shalt*

(1) [See *antè*, p. 62.]

not commit adultery." "You are wrong," said Johnson: "it is a negative precept, and ought to be pronounced, "Thou shalt *not* commit adultery. (1)

217. *Warburton.*

When a Scotsman was talking against Warburton, Johnson said, he had more literature than had been imported from Scotland since the days of Buchanan. Upon his mentioning other eminent writers of the Scots — "These will not do," said Johnson; "let us have some more of your northern lights; these are mere farthing candles."

To a person who asked "whether he had ever been in company with Dr. Warburton," he answered, "I never saw him till one evening, about a week ago, at the Bishop of St. Asaph's: at first he looked surlily at me; but after we had been jostled into conversation, he took me to a window, asked me some questions, and before we parted was so well pleased with me that he patted me." "You always, Sir, preserved a respect for him?" "Yes, and justly; when as yet I was in no favour with the world, he spoke well of me (2), and I hope I never forgot the obligation."

218. *Authors.*

To a lady who signified a great desire to increase her acquaintance with authors, conceiving that more might be learned from their conversation and manner of living, than from their works, "Madam," said he, "the best part of an author will always be found in his writings."

219. *Complainers.*

"Complainers," said he, "are always loud and clamorous."

(1) See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 193.
(2) In his Preface to Shakspeare. — C.

220. *Lord Chesterfield's Son.*

Johnson said that he had once seen Mr. Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield's son (1), at Dodsley's shop, and was so much struck with his awkward manner and appearance, that he could not help asking Mr. Dodsley who he was.

221. *Fear of Death.*

To his censure of fear (2) in general, he made, however, one exception — with respect to the fear of death, *timorum maximus*: he thought that the best of us were but unprofitable servants, and had much reason to fear.

222. *Dr. Birch.*

Of Dr. Birch, Johnson was used to speak in this manner: — "Tom is a lively rogue; he remembers a great deal, and can tell many pleasant stories; but a pen is to Tom a torpedo, the touch of it benumbs his hand and his brain: Tom can talk; but he is no writer."

223. *Lyttelton and the Leasowes.*

Johnson's account of Lord Lyttelton's envy to Shenstone for his improvements in his grounds, &c. was confirmed by an ingenious writer. Spence was in the house for a fortnight with the Lytteltons before they offered to show him Shenstone's place.

He has been accused of treating Lord Lyttelton roughly in his life of him: he assured a friend, however, that he kept back a very ridiculous anecdote of him, relative to a question he put to a great divine of his time.

224. *Public Opinion.*

Dr. Johnson held all authors very cheap that were not satisfied with the opinion of the public about them. He used to say, that every man who writes thinks he

(1) [The natural son to whom Lord Chesterfield addressed the celebrated Letters on Manners.]

(2) [See *antè*, Vol. V. p. 231., and p. 123. of this volume.]

can amuse or inform mankind, and they must be the best judges of his pretensions.

225. *Puns.*

Though no great friend to puns, he once, by accident, made a singular one. A person who affected to live after the Greek manner, and to anoint himself with oil, was one day mentioned: Johnson, in the course of conversation on the singularity of his practice, gave him the denomination of this man of *Greece* (or *grease*, as you please to take it).

226. *Society and Retirement.*

He thought worse of the vices of retirement than of those of society.

227. *The Law.*

He thought very favourably of the profession of the law, and said that the sages thereof, for a long series backward, had been friends to religion. Fortescue says, that their afternoon's employment was the study of the Scriptures. (1)

(1) Lord Coke, in his Institutes, l. ii. c. 1. s. 85., quotes these ancient, as he calls them, verses, recommending a proper distribution of the time of a law-student.

> " Sex horas somno, totidem des legibus æquis,
> Quatuor orabis, des epulisque duas;
> Quod superest ultrò sacris largire Camænis."

Of these Sir William Jones made two versions: —

> " Six hours to sleep, to law's grave study six;
> Four spend in prayer — the rest on nature fix;"

rather (he adds),

> " Six hours to law, to soothing slumber seven;
> Ten to the world allot, and all to Heaven."

It is not very clear what *nature* in the first version means; in the second Sir William has shortened his day to twenty-three hours: and the general advice " of *all to Heaven* " destroys the peculiar appropriation of a certain period to religious exercises. The following version, if less poetical, is at least more exact:

> " Six hours to sleep devote — to law the same;
> Pray four, feast two — the rest the Muses claim." — C

228. *The Old English Divines.*

That Johnson owed his excellence as a writer to the divines and others of the last century, I can attest. Hooker he admired for his logical precision, Sanderson for his acuteness, and Taylor for his amazing erudition; Sir Thomas Browne for his penetration, and Cowley for the ease and unaffected structure of his periods. The tinsel of Sprat disgusted him, and he could but just endure the smooth verbosity of Tillotson. Hammond and Barrow he thought involved, and of the latter that he was unnecessarily prolix.

229. "*Fiat experimentum in corpore vili.*"

He was much pleased with the following repartee: "*Fiat experimentum in corpore vili,*" said a French physician to his colleague, in speaking of the disorder of a poor man that understood Latin, and who was brought into an hospital; "*Corpus non tam vile est,*" says the patient, "*pro quo Christus ipse non dedignatus est mori.*"

230. *Hume.*

He would never hear Hume mentioned with any temper. "A man," said he, "who endeavoured to persuade his friend, who had the stone, to shoot himself!"

231. *Madness.*

He was a great enemy to the present fashionable way of supposing worthless and infamous persons mad.

232. *A Scoundrel.*

Dr. Johnson used to say a man was a scoundrel who was afraid of any thing.

233. *Clarke.—Smalridge.*

He thought of Dr. Clarke, whose sermons he valued above all others, that he complied too frequently with invitations to dine with persons of high rank, his parishioners, and spent too much of his time in ceremonious visits: differing, in this respect, from his contemporary Smalridge, the elegant Favonius of the Tatler, who, in the height of his reputation as a preacher, was ever ready to visit a sick person in the most obscure alley of Westminster.

234. *Biography.*

When accused of mentioning ridiculous anecdotes in the "Lives of the Poets," he said, he should not have been an exact biographer if he had omitted them. "The business of such a one," said he, "is to give a complete account of the person whose life he is writing, and to discriminate him from all other persons, by any peculiarities of character or sentiments he may happen to have."

235. *Round Numbers.*

"Round numbers," said he, "are always false."

236. *Friendships.*

He once mentioned to me a saying of Dr. Nicholls, and highly commended it; namely, that it was a point of wisdom to form intimacies, and choose for our friends only persons of known worth and integrity; and that to do so had been the rule of his life.

237. *Story Telling.*

Being once asked, if he ever embellished a story—"No," said he; "a story is to lead either to the knowledge of a fact or character, and is good for nothing if it be not strictly and literally true."

238. *Praise.*

He said to me one day, "Garrick, I hear, complains that I am the only popular author of his time who has exhibited no praise of him in print; but he is mistaken, Akenside has forborne to mention him. Some, indeed, are lavish in their applause of all who come within the compass of their recollection; yet he who praises every body praises nobody; when both scales are equally loaded, neither can preponderate."

239. *Matrimony.*

He was extremely fond of the company and conversation of women, and had certainly very correct notions as to the basis on which matrimonial connections should be formed. He always advised his friends, when they were about to marry, to unite themselves to a woman of a pious and religious frame of mind. "Fear of the world, and a sense of honour," said he, "may have an effect upon a man's conduct and behaviour: a woman without religion is without the only motive that in general can incite her to do well."

When some one asked him for what he should marry, he replied, "first, for virtue; secondly, for wit; thirdly, for beauty; and fourthly, for money."

240. *Pope.*

In his interview with Lord Marchmont, he told me, that his first question was, "What kind of a man was Mr. Pope in his conversation?" His lordship answered, "That if the conversation did not take something of an epigrammatic turn, he fell asleep, or perhaps pretended to be so."

241. *Allegorical Painting.*

Talking with some persons about allegorical painting, he said, "I had rather see the portrait of a dog that I

know, than all the allegorical paintings they can show me in the world."

242. *A Lad of Parts.*

He once told me, that being at the house of a friend, whose son in his school vacation was come home, the father spoke of this child as a lad of pregnant parts, and said that he was well versed in the classics, and acquainted with history, in the study whereof he took great delight. Having this information, Johnson, as a test of the young scholar's attainments, put this question to him: — "At what time did the heathen oracles cease?" The boy, not in the least daunted, answered, "At the dissolution of religious houses."

243. *War.*

He laughed much at Lord Kaimes' opinion that war was a good thing occasionally, as so much valour and virtue were exhibited in it. "A fire," says Johnson, "might as well be thought a good thing; there is the bravery and address of the firemen in extinguishing it; there is much humanity exerted in saving the lives and properties of the poor sufferers; yet," says he, "after all this, who can say a fire is a good thing?"

244. *Preachers.*

Johnson seemed to think it a duty to accept in good part the endeavours of all public instructors, however meanly qualified for the office, and ever to forbear exercising his critical talents on the effusions of men inferior in learning and abilities to himself. Probably he, on such occasions, recollected the quaint distich of Herbert: —

> "The worst have something good; where all want sense,
> God takes the text, and preacheth patience."

245. *Music.*

Of music he said, "It is the only sensual pleasure without vice."

246. *Tea.*

Speaking one day of tea, he said, "What a delightful beverage must that be that pleases all palates at a time when they can take nothing else at breakfast!"

247. *Richard Baxter.*

Of Baxter he entertained a very high opinion, and often spoke of him to me as a man of great parts, profound learning, and exemplary piety. He said of the office for the communion, drawn up by him and produced at the Savoy conference, that it was one of the first compositions of the ritual kind he had ever seen. (1)

248. *Voltaire's Charles XII.*

"The Life of Charles the Twelfth," by Voltaire, he said was one of the finest pieces of history ever written.

249. *Jeremy Taylor.*

At times when he was most distressed, I recommended to him the perusal of Bishop Taylor's "Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying," and also his "Ductor Dubitantium." Of the former, though he placed the author at the head of all the divines that have succeeded the fathers, he said, that on the reading thereof, he had found little more than he had brought himself; and, at the mention of the latter, he seemed to shrink.

250. *Shenstone.*

To some lady who was praising Shenstone's poems very much, and who had an Italian greyhound lying

(1) It is printed at the end of the first volume of Dr. Calamy's Abridgment of Baxter's History of his Life and Times. — H

by the fire, he said, "Shenstone holds amongst poets the same rank your dog holds amongst dogs: he has not the sagacity of the hound, the docility of the spaniel, nor the courage of the bull-dog, yet he is still a pretty fellow."

251. *Plague in London — Nathaniel Hodges.*

With all that asperity of manners with which he has been charged, and which kept at a distance many who, to my knowledge, would have been glad of an intimacy with him, he possessed the affections of pity and compassion in a most eminent degree. In a mixed company, of which I was one, the conversation turned on the pestilence which raged in London in the year 1665, and gave occasion to Johnson to speak of Dr. Nathaniel Hodges, who, in the height of that calamity, continued in the city, and was almost the only one of his profession that had the courage to oppose the endeavours of his art to the spreading of the contagion. It was the hard fate of this person, a short time after, to die a prisoner for debt in Ludgate. Johnson related this circumstance to us, with the tears ready to start from his eyes, and with great energy said, "Such a man would not have been suffered to perish in these times."

252. *Jortin.*

He was much pleased with Dr. Jortin's Sermons, the language of which he thought very elegant; but thought his "Life of Erasmus" a dull book.

253. *Blackmore.*

To a gentleman who expressed himself in disrespectful terms of Blackmore, one of whose poetic bulls he happened just then to recollect, Dr. Johnson answered, "I hope, Sir, a blunder, after you have heard what I shall

relate, will not be reckoned decisive against a poet's reputation. When I was a young man, I translated Addison's Latin poem on the Battle of the Pygmies and the Cranes, and must plead guilty to the following couplet:

> "Down from the guardian boughs the nests they flung,
> And kill'd the yet unanimated young ——"

And yet I trust I am no blockhead. I afterwards changed the word *kill'd* into *crush'd*."

254. *Watts's "Improvement of the Mind."*

Watts's "Improvement of the Mind" was a very favourite book with him: he used to recommend it, as he also did "Le Dictionnaire Portatif" of Abbé L'Avocat.

255. *Kempis, "De Imitatione Christi."*

He was, for some time, pleased with Kempis's tract, "De Imitatione Christi;" but at length laid it aside, saying, "that the main design of it was to promote monastic piety, and inculcate ecclesiastical obedience." One sentiment therein he however greatly applauded, and I find it adopted by Bishop Taylor, who gives it in these words: — "It is no great matter to live lovingly with good-natured, with humble, and meek persons; but he that can do so with the froward, with the wilful, and the ignorant, with the peevish and perverse, he only hath true charity. Always remembering, that our true solid peace, the peace of God, consists rather in compliance with others, than in being complied with; in suffering and forbearing, rather than in contention and victory."

256. *Dr. Hammond.*

He was extremely fond of Dr. Hammond's (1) works,

(1) Henry Hammond, D.D., born in 1605; elected a fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1625; canon of Christchurch

and sometimes gave them as a present to young men going into orders: he also bought them for the library at Streatham.

257. *Mrs. Macaulay's "History."*

Being asked, whether he had read Mrs. Macaulay's second volume of the "History of England," — "No, Sir," says he, "nor her first neither."

258. *Churchill.*

Being told that Churchill had abused him under the character of Pomposo, in his Ghost, "I always thought," said he, "he was a shallow fellow, and I think so still."

259.* *Lord Kaimes.*

Johnson thought very well of Lord Kaimes's "Elements of Criticism;" of others of his writings he thought very indifferently.

260. *Mandeville.*

He thought highly of, and would often commend, Mandeville's "Discourse on Hypochondriac Affections."

261. *Cowley.*

In his own judgment of the "Lives of the Poets," Johnson gave the preference to that of Cowley, as containing a nicer investigation and discrimination of the characteristics of wit, than is elsewhere to be found.

262. *Addison's "Cato."*

He thought Addison's "Cato" the best model of

1645. He suffered much persecution during the Rebellion, and was, it is said, designed for the bishopric of Worcester at the Restoration; but he died a few days before the king's return. He was a voluminous writer, but his best known work is "A Paraphrase and Annotations on the New Testament," which Dr. Johnson recommended to Mr. Boswell. See *antè*, Vol. VI. p. 181. — C.

tragedy we had; yet he used to say, of all things, the most ridiculous would be to see a girl cry at the repre sentation of it.

263. *Religious Poetry.*

Moses Browne, originally a pen-cutter, and afterwards a writer in the "Gentleman's Magazine," published a series of devout contemplations, called "Sunday Thoughts." Johnson, who often expressed his dislike of religious poetry, and who, for the purpose of religious meditation, seemed to think one day as proper as another, read them with cold approbation, and said, he had a great mind to write and publish "Monday Thoughts."

264. *Abyssinian Bruce.*

He said that when he first conversed with Mr. Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, he was very much inclined to believe he had been there; but that he had afterwards altered his opinion.(1)

265. *Government.*

That Johnson was a Tory, he not only never hesitated to confess, but, by his frequent invectives against the Whigs, was forward to proclaim: yet was he not so besotted in his notions, as to abet what is called the patriarchal scheme, as delineated by Sir Robert Filmer and other writers on government; nor, with others of a more sober cast, to acquiesce in the opinion that, because submission to governors is, in general terms, inculcated in the Holy Scriptures, the resistance of tyranny and oppression is, in all cases, unlawful: he seemed rather to adopt the sentiments of Hooker on the

(1) [See *anté*, Vol. V. p. 274.]

subject, as explained by Hoadly, and, by consequence, to look on submission to lawful authority as a moral obligation; he therefore condemned the conduct of James the Second during his short reign; and, had he been a subject of that weak and infatuated monarch, would, I am persuaded, have resisted any invasion of his right, or unwarrantable exertion of power, with the same spirit as did the president and fellows of Magdalen College, or those conscientious divines, the seven bishops. This disposition, as it leads to Whiggism, one would have thought might have reconciled him to the memory of James's successor, whose exercise of the regal authority among us merited better returns than were made him; but, it had no such effect: he never spoke of King William but in terms of reproach, and, in his opinion of him, seemed to adopt all the prejudices of jacobite bigotry and rancour.

266. *Sir Robert Walpole.*

Of Sir Robert Walpole, notwithstanding that he had written against him in the early part of his life, he had a high opinion. He said of him, that he was a fine fellow, and that his very enemies deemed him so before his death: he honoured his memory for having kept this country in peace many years, as also for the goodness and placability of his temper; of which Pulteney, Earl of Bath, thought so highly, that, in a conversation with Johnson, he said, that Sir Robert was of a temper so calm and equal, and so hard to be provoked, that he was very sure he never felt the bitterest invectives against him for half an hour.

To the same purpose Johnson related the following anecdote, which he said he had from Lord North: — Sir Robert having got into his hands some treasonable letters of his inveterate enemy, William Shippen, one of the heads of the jacobite faction, he sent for him, and burned them before his face. Some time after-

wards, Shippen had occasion to take the oaths to the government in the House of Commons, which, while he was doing, Sir Robert, who stood next him, and knew his principles to be the same as ever, smiled: "Egad, Robin," said Shippen, who had observed him, "that's hardly fair."

267. *Patriots.* — *Pulteney.*

To party opposition Dr. Johnson ever expressed great aversion; and, of the pretences of *patriots*, always spoke with indignation and contempt. He partook of the short-lived joy that infatuated the public, when Sir Robert Walpole ceased to have the direction of the national councils, and trusted to the professions of Mr. Pulteney and his adherents, who called themselves the country-party, that all elections should thenceforward be free and uninfluenced, and that bribery and corruption, which were never practised but by courtiers and their agents, should be no more. A few weeks, nay, a few days, convinced Johnson, that what had assumed the appearance of patriotism, was personal hatred and inveterate malice in some, and in others, an ambition for that power which, when they had got it, they knew not how to exercise. A change of men, and in some respect of measures, took place: Mr. Pulteney's ambition was gratified by a peerage; the wants of his associates were relieved by places, and seats at the public boards; and, in a short time, the stream of government resumed its former channel, and ran with a current as even as it had ever done.

Upon this developement of the motives, the views, and the consistency of the above-mentioned band of *patriots,* Johnson once remarked to me, that it had given more strength to government than all that had been written in its defence; meaning thereby, that it had destroyed all confidence in men of that character.

268. *Johnson and Arkwright.*

His knowledge in manufactures was extensive, and his comprehension relative to mechanical contrivances was still more extraordinary. The well-known Mr. Arkwright pronounced him to be the only person who on a first view, understood both the principle and powers of his most complicated piece of machinery.

269. *A lazy Dog.*

One day, on seeing an old terrier lie asleep by the fireside at Streatham, he said, "Presto, you are, if possible, a more lazy dog than I am."

270. *Goldsmith's "Traveller."*

He repeated poetry with wonderful energy and feeling. He was seen to weep whilst he repeated Goldsmith's character of the English in his "Traveller," beginning "*Stern o'er each bosom, &c.*(1)

271. *Time.*

He was extremely accurate in his computation of time. He could tell how many heroic Latin verses could be repeated in such a given portion of it, and was anxious that his friends should take pains to form in their minds some measure for estimating the lapse of it.

272. *Suspicion.*

Johnson was not apt to judge ill of persons without good reasons: an old friend of his used to say, that in general he thought too well of mankind.

273. *Latin.*

Johnson spoke Latin with great fluency and elegance. He said, indeed, he had taken great pains about it.

(1) A favourite passage. See *antè*, Vol. V. p. 85. — C.

274. *Education.*

Being asked by Dr. Lawrence, what he thought the best system of education, he replied, "School in school hours, and home instruction in the intervals."

275. *Mallet.—Hume.—Colman.*

He once expressed these sentiments:—"I have seldom met with a man whose colloquial ability exceeded that of Mallet. I was but once in Hume's company, and then his only attempt at merriment consisted in his display of a drawing too indecently gross to have delighted, even in a brothel. Colman never produced a luckier thing than his first Ode in imitation of Gray (1); a considerable part of it may be numbered among those felicities which no man has twice attained."

276. *Johnson's Talk.*

One who had long known Johnson said of him, "In general you may tell what the man to whom you are speaking will say next: this you can never do of Johnson: his images, his allusions, his great powers of ridicule, throw the appearance of novelty upon the most common conversation."

277. *Mr. Thrale's Death-bed.*

He attended Mr. Thrale in his last moments, and stayed in the room praying, as is imagined, till he had drawn his last breath. "His servants," said he, "would have waited upon him in this awful period and why not his friend?"

278. *The Thrales.—Leave-taking.*

The death of Mr. Thrale dissolved the friendship between him and Johnson; but it abated not in the latter that care for the interests of those whom his

(1) ["Odes to Obscurity and Oblivion." See *antè*, Vol. V. p. 275.]

friend had left behind him, which he thought himself bound to cherish, as a living principle of gratitude. The favours he had received from Mr. Thrale were to be repaid by the exercise of kind offices towards his relict and her children; and these, circumstanced as Johnson was, could only be prudent counsels, friendly admonition to the one, and preceptive instruction to the others, both which he was ever ready to interpose. Nevertheless, it was observed by myself, and other of Johnson's friends, that, soon after the decease of Mr. Thrale, his visits to Streatham became less and less frequent, and that he studiously avoided the mention of the place or family. It seems that between him and the widow there was a formal taking of leave, for I find in his diary the following note: — "April 5th, 1783. "I took leave of Mrs. Thrale. I was much moved. I had some expostulations with her. She said that she was likewise affected. I commended the Thrales with great good-will to God. May my petitions have been heard!"

279. *Johnson's Charity.*

Almost throughout his life, poverty and distressed circumstances seemed to be the strongest of all recommendations to his favour. When asked by one of his most intimate friends, how he could bear to be surrounded by such necessitous and undeserving people as he had about him, his answer was, "If I did not assist them no one else would, and they must be lost for want."

280. *Rapidity of Composition.*

"I wrote," said Johnson, "the first seventy lines in the 'Vanity of Human Wishes,' in the course of one morning, in that small house beyond the church at Hampstead. The whole number was composed before I committed a single couplet to writing. The same method I pursued in regard to the Prologue on opening

Drury Lane Theatre. I did not afterwards change more than a word in it, and that was done at the remonstrance of Garrick. I did not think his criticism just, but it was necessary that he should be satisfied with what he was to utter."

281. *Mimicry.—Humour.*

Gesticular mimicry and buffoonery Johnson hated, and would often huff Garrick for exercising it in his presence; but of the talent of humour he had an almost enviable portion. To describe the nature of this faculty, as he was wont to display it in his hours of mirth and relaxation, I must say that it was ever of that arch and dry kind, which lies concealed under the appearance of gravity, and which acquiesces in an error for the purpose of refuting it.

282. *Invitations to Dinner.*

Invitations to dine with those whom he liked he so seldom declined, that to a friend of his, he said, " I never but once, upon a resolution to employ myself in study, balked an invitation out to dinner, and then I stayed at home and did nothing."

283. *Asperity of Manners.*

There was more asperity in Johnson's manner of expression than in his natural disposition; for I have heard that, in many instances, and in some with tears in his eyes, he has apologised to those whom he had offended by contradiction or roughness of behaviour.

284. *Reynolds's Portrait of Johnson.*

The picture of him by Sir Joshua Reynolds, which was painted for Mr. Beauclerk, and is now Mr. Langton's, and scraped in mezzotinto by Doughty, is extremely like him: there is in it that appearance of a labouring working mind, of an indolent reposing body,

which he had to a very great degree. Indeed, the common operations of dressing, shaving, &c. were a toil to him: he held the care of the body very cheap. He used to say, that a man who rode out for an appetite consulted but little the dignity of human nature.

285. *Johnson's last Illness.*

A few days after the remnant of the Ivy-lane Club had dined with him, [Feb. 1784.] Dr. Johnson sent for me, and informed me that he had discovered in himself the symptoms of a dropsy; and, indeed, his very much increased bulk, and the swollen appearance of his legs, seemed to indicate no less. He told me, that he was desirous of making a will, and requested me to be one of his executors: upon my consenting, he gave me to understand that he meant to make a provision for his servant, Frank, of about 70*l.* a year for his life, and concerted with me a plan for investing a sum sufficient for the purpose: at the same time he opened to me the state of his circumstances, and the amount of what he had to dispose of.

In a visit which I made him in a few days, in consequence of a very pressing request to see me, I found him labouring under great dejection of mind. He bade me draw near him, and said he wanted to enter into a serious conversation with me; and, upon my expressing a willingness to join in it, he, with a look that cut me to the heart, told me that he had the prospect of death before him, and that he dreaded to meet his Saviour. (1) I could not but be astonished at such a declaration, and advised him, as I had done once before, to reflect on the course of his life, and the services he had rendered to the cause of religion and virtue, as well by his example as his writings; to which he answered, that he had

(1) This, and other expressions of the like kind, which he uttered to me, should put to silence the idle reports that he dreaded annihilation. — H.

written as a philosopher, but had not lived like one. In the estimation of his offences, he reasoned thus: "Every man knows his own sins, and also what grace he has resisted. But, to those of others, and the circumstances under which they were committed, he is a stranger: he is, therefore, to look on himself as the greatest sinner that he knows of."(1) At the conclusion of this argument, which he strongly enforced, he uttered this passionate exclamation, — "Shall I, who have been a teacher of others, myself be a castaway?"

Much to the same purpose passed between us in this and other conversations that I had with him; in all which I could not but wonder, as much at the freedom with which he opened his mind, and the compunction he seemed to feel for the errors of his past life, as I did at his making choice of me for his confessor, knowing full well how meanly qualified I was for such an office.

It was on a Thursday (2) that I had this conversation with him; and here, let not the supercilious lip of scorn protrude itself, while I relate that, he declared his intention to devote the whole of the next day to fasting, humiliation, and such other devotional exercises as became a man in his situation. On the Saturday following I made him a visit, and, upon entering his room, observed in his countenance such a serenity, as indicated that some remarkable crisis of his disorder had produced a change in his feelings. He told me that, pursuant to the resolution he had mentioned, he had spent the preceding day in an abstraction from all worldly concerns; that, to prevent interruption, he had,

(1) I find the above sentiment in "Law's Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life," a book which Johnson was very conversant with, and often commended. — H.

(2) It appears from Johnson's own letters, that the event itself took place on Thursday, 19th February. See *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 255. — C.

in the morning, ordered Frank not to admit any one to him; and, the better to enforce the charge, had added these awful words, "For your master is preparing himself to die." He then mentioned to me, that, in the course of this exercise, he found himself relieved from that disorder which had been growing on him, and was become very oppressing, the dropsy, by a gradual evacuation of water to the amount of twenty pints, a like instance whereof he had never before experienced; and asked me what I thought of it.

I was well aware of the lengths that superstition and enthusiasm will lead men, and how ready some are to attribute favourable events to supernatural causes, and said, that it might savour of presumption to say that, in this instance, God had wrought a miracle; yet, as divines recognise certain dispensations of his providence, recorded in the Scripture by the denomination of returns of prayer, and his omnipotence is now the same as ever, I thought it would be little less than criminal to ascribe his late relief to causes merely natural, and that the safer opinion was, that he had not in vain humbled himself before his Maker. He seemed to acquiesce in all that I said on this important subject; and, several times, while I was discoursing with him, cried out, "It is wonderful, very wonderful!"

His zeal for religion, as manifested in his writings and conversation, and the accounts extant that attest his piety, have induced the enemies to his memory to tax him with superstition. To that charge I oppose his behaviour on this occasion, and leave it to the judgment of sober and rational persons, whether such an unexpected event as that above mentioned would not have prompted a really superstitious man to some more passionate exclamation than that it was "wonderful."(1)

(1) Doubtless there are men who look upon all religious exercises as superstition, and upon prayer and other acts of devotion as evidences of a weak mind. Those say, that reason is a

After the declaration he had made of his intention to provide for his servant Frank, and before his going into the country, I had frequently pressed him to make a will, and had gone so far as to make a draft of one, with blanks for the names of the executors and residuary legatee, and directing in what manner it was to be executed and attested; but he was exceedingly averse to this business; and, while he was in Derbyshire, I repeated my solicitations, for this purpose, by letters. When he arrived in town, he had done nothing in it, and, to what I formerly said, I now added, that he had never mentioned the disposal of the residue of his estate, which, after the purchase of an annuity for Frank, would be something considerable, and that he would do well to bequeath it to his relations. His answer was, "I care not what becomes of the residue." A few days after, it appeared that he had executed the draft, the blanks remaining, with all the solemnities of a real will. I could get him no farther; and thus, for some time, the matter rested.

His complaints still increasing, I continued pressing him to make a will; but he still procrastinated that business. On the 27th of November, in the morning, I went to his house, with a purpose still farther to urge him not to give occasion, by dying intestate, for litigation among his relations; but finding that he was gone to pass the day with the Rev. Mr. Strahan, at Islington, I followed him thither, and found there our old friend Mr. Ryland, and Mr. Hoole. Upon my sitting

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sufficient rule of action, and that God needs not to be supplicated, nor requires our thanks. Of this class of individuals I take Annet to have been one: he who wrote against the miracles, and was some years ago convicted of blasphemy, and sentenced to imprisonment. The wife of Jackson, the bookseller, in Clare Court, Drury Lane, once told me, that this man would often call in at their shop; and if he happened to see a Bible lying on the counter, would entreat her to take it away, for that he could not bear the sight of it. — H.

down, he said, that the prospect of the change he was bout to undergo, and the thought of meeting his Saviour, troubled him, but that he had hope that he would not reject him.

I then began to discourse with him about his will, and the provision for Frank, till he grew angry. He told me, that he had signed and sealed the paper I left him; but that, said I, had blanks in it, which, as it seems, you have not filled up with the names of the executors. "You should have filled them up yourself," answered he. I replied, that such an act would have looked as if I meant to prevent his choice of a fitter person. "Sir," said he, "these minor virtues are not to be exercised in matters of such importance as this." At length he said, that on his return home he would send for a clerk, and dictate a will to him. "You will then," said I, "be *inops consilii*; rather do it now. With Mr. Strahan's permission, I will be his guest at dinner; and, if Mr. Hoole will please to hold the pen, I will, in a few words, make such a disposition of your estate as you shall direct." To this he assented; but such a paroxysm of the asthma seized him, as prevented our going on. As the fire burned up, he found himself relieved, and grew cheerful. "The fit," said he, "was very sharp; but I am now easy."

After I had dictated a few lines, I told him, that the ancient form of wills contained a profession of the faith of the testator; and that he being a man of eminence for learning and parts, it would afford an illustrious example, and well become him, to make such an explicit declaration of his belief, as might obviate all suspicions that he was any other than a Christian. He thanked me for the hint, and, calling for paper, wrote on a slip, that I had in my hand and gave him, the following words: — "I humbly commit to the infinite and eternal goodness of Almighty God, my soul polluted with many sins; but, as I hope, purified by repentance, and

redeemed, as I trust, by the death of Jesus Christ (1);" and, returning it to me, said, "This I commit to your custody."

Upon my calling on him for directions to proceed, he told me that his father, in the course of his trade of a bookseller, had become bankrupt, and that Mr. William Innys had assisted him with money or credit to continue his business. "This," said he, "I consider as an obligation on me to be grateful to his descendants, and I therefore mean to give 200*l.* to his representative." He then meditated a devise of his house at Lichfield to the corporation of that city for a charitable use; but, it being freehold, he said, "I cannot live a twelvemonth, and the last statute of mortmain stands in the way: I must, therefore, think of some other disposition of it." His next consideration was, a provision for Frank, concerning the amount whereof I found he had been consulting Dr. Brocklesby, to whom he had put this question, "What would be a proper annuity to bequeath to a favourite servant?" The doctor answered, that the circumstances of the master were the truest measure; and that, in the case of a nobleman, 50*l.* a year was deemed an adequate reward for many years' faithful service. "Then shall I," said Johnson, "be *nobilissimus*; for I mean to leave Frank 70*l.* a year, and I desire you to tell him so." And now, at the making of the will, a devise, equivalent to such a provision, was therein inserted. The residue of his estate and effects, which took in, though he intended it not, the house at Lichfield, he bequeathed to his executors, in

(1) The will of the other great luminary of that age, Mr. Burke, is throughout strikingly characteristic, and was no doubt chiefly drawn up by himself. Those who revere his memory will read with satisfaction the opening declaration. "First, according to the ancient, good, and laudable custom, *of which my heart and understanding recognise the propriety*, I bequeath my soul to God, hoping for his mercy through the only merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—MARKLAND.

trust for a religious association; which it is needless to describe.

Having executed the will with the necessary formalities, he would have come home; but being pressed by Mr. and Mrs. Strahan to stay, he consented, and we all dined together. Towards the evening he grew cheerful; and I having promised to take him in my coach, Mr. Strahan and Mr. Ryland would accompany him home. In the way thither he appeared much at ease, and told stories. At eight I set him down, and Mr. Strahan and Mr. Ryland betook themselves to their respective homes.

Sunday, Nov. 28th. I saw him about noon: he was dozing; but waking, he found himself in a circle of his friends. Upon opening his eyes, he said, that the prospect of his dissolution was very terrible to him, and addressed himself to us all, in nearly these words: "You see the state in which I am; conflicting with bodily pain and mental distraction: while you are in health and strength, labour to do good, and avoid evil, if ever you hope to escape the distress that now oppresses me."

A little while after,—"I had, very early in my life, the seeds of goodness in me: I had a love of virtue, and a reverence for religion; and these, I trust, have brought forth in me fruits meet for repentance; and, if I have repented as I ought, I am forgiven. I have, at times, entertained a loathing of sin and of myself, particularly at the beginning of this year, when I had the prospect of death before me; and this has not abated when my fears of death have been less; and, at these times, I have had such rays of hope shot into my soul, as have almost persuaded me that I am in a state of reconciliation with God."

29th. Mr. Langton, who had spent the evening with him, reported, that his hopes were increased, and that he was much cheered upon being reminded of the general tendency of his writings, and of his example.

30th. I saw him in the evening, and found him cheerful. Was informed that he had, for his dinner, eaten heartily of a French duck pie and a pheasant.

Dec. 1. He was busied in destroying papers. Gave to Mr. Langton and another person (1), to fair-copy, some translations of the Greek epigrams, which he had made in the preceding nights, and transcribed the next morning, and they began to work on them.

3d. Finding his legs continue to swell, he signified to his physicians a strong desire to have them scarified; but they, unwilling to put him to pain, and fearing a mortification, declined advising it. He afterwards consulted his surgeon, and he performed the operation on one leg.

4th. I visited him: the scarification made yesterday in his leg appeared to have had little effect. He said to me, that he was easier in his mind, and as fit to die at that instant as he could be a year hence. He requested me to receive the sacrament with him on Sunday, the next day. Complained of great weakness, and of phantoms that haunted his imagination.

5th. Being Sunday, I communicated with him and Mr. Langton, and other of his friends, as many as nearly filled the room. Mr. Strahan, who was constant in his attendance on him throughout his illness, performed the office. Previous to reading the exhortation, Johnson knelt, and, with a degree of fervour that I had never been witness to before, uttered the following most eloquent and energetic prayer: —

"Almighty and most merciful Father, I am now, as to human eyes it seems, about to commemorate, for the last time, the death of thy son Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer. Grant, O Lord, that my whole hope and confidence may be in his merits and in thy mercy: forgive and accept my late conversion; enforce and accept my imperfect repentance; make

(1) Young Mr. Desmoulins. — C.

this commemoration of him available to the confirmation of my faith, the establishment of my hope, and the enlargement of my charity; and make the death of thy son Jesus effectual to my redemption. Have mercy upon me, and pardon the multitude of my offences. Bless my friends: have mercy upon all men. Support me by the grace of thy Holy Spirit in the days of weakness, and at the hour of death, and receive me, at my death, to everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ. — Amen."

Upon rising from his knees, after the office was concluded, he said, that he dreaded to meet God in a state of idiocy, or with opium in his head; and, that having now communicated with the effects of a dose upon him, he doubted if his exertions were the genuine operations of his mind, and repeated from Bishop Taylor this sentiment, "That little that has been omitted in health can be done to any purpose in sickness." (1)

While he was dressing and preparing for this solemnity, an accident happened which went very near to disarrange his mind. He had mislaid, and was very anxious to find a paper that contained private instructions to his executors; and myself, Mr. Strahan, Mr. Langton, Mr. Hoole, Frank, and I believe some others that were about him, went into his bed-chamber to seek it. In our search, I laid my hands on a parchment-covered book, into which I imagined it might have been slipped. Upon opening the book, I found it to be meditations and reflections, in Johnson's own handwriting; and having been told a day or two before by

(1) He very much admired, and often in the course of his illness recited, from the conclusion of old Isaac Walton's Life of Bishop Sanderson, the following pathetic request: — "Thus this pattern of meekness and primitive innocence changed this for a better life: — 'tis now too late to wish that mine may be like his: for I am in the eighty-fifth year of my age, and God knoweth it hath not: but, I most humbly beseech Almighty God, that my death may; and I do as earnestly beg, that, if any reader shall receive any satisfaction from this very plain, and as true, relation, he will be so charitable as to say, Amen."—H.

Frank, that a person (1) formerly intimately connected with his master, a joint proprietor of a newspaper, well known among the booksellers, and of whom Mrs. Williams once told me she had often cautioned him to beware; I say, having been told that this person had lately been very importunate to get access to him, indeed to such a degree as that, when he was told that the doctor was not to be seen, he would push his way up stairs; and having stronger reasons than I need here mention, to suspect that this man might find and make an ill use of the book, I put it, and a less of the same kind, into my pocket; at the same time telling those around me, and particularly Mr. Langton and Mr. Strahan, that I had got both, with my reasons for thus securing them. After the ceremony was over, Johnson took me aside, and told me that I had a book of his in my pocket; I answered that I had two, and that to prevent their falling into the hands of a person who had attempted to force his way into the house, I had done as I conceived a friendly act, but not without telling his friends of it, and also my reasons. He then asked me what ground I had for my suspicion of the man I mentioned: I told him his great importunity to get admittance; and farther, that immediately after a visit which he made me, in the year 1775, I missed a paper of a public nature, and of great importance; and that a day or two after, and before it could be put to its intended use, I saw it in the newspapers. (2)

(1) Mr. George Steevens. See *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 406. — C.

(2) As I take no pleasure in the disgrace of others, I regret the necessity I am under of mentioning these particulars: my reason for it is, that the transaction which so disturbed him may possibly be better known than the motives that actuated me at the time. — Hawkins. — Miss Hawkins's Memoirs, vol. i. p. 264., tells this story in the same way, supplies Steevens's name, and insists on the same justification, which would be quite inconclusive, even if the fact on which the suspicion against Steevens

At the mention of this circumstance, Johnson paused; but recovering himself, said, "You should not have laid hands on the book; for had I missed it, and not known you had it, I should have roared for my book, as Othello did for his handkerchief, and probably have run mad."

I gave him time, till the next day, to compose himself, and then wrote him a letter, apologising, and assigning at large the reasons for my conduct; and received a verbal answer by Mr. Langton, which, were I to repeat it, would render me suspected of inexcusable vanity (1); it concluded with these words, "If I was not satisfied with this, I must be a savage."

7th. I again visited him. Before my departure, Dr. Brocklesby came in, and, taking him by the wrist, Johnson gave him a look of great contempt, and ridiculed the judging of his disorder by the pulse. He complained, that the sarcocele had again made its appearance, and asked if a puncture would not relieve him, as it had done the year before? The doctor answered, that it might, but that his surgeon was the best judge of the effect of such an operation. Johnson, upon this, said, "How many men in a year die through the timidity of those whom they consult for health! I want length of life, and you fear giving me pain, which I care not for."

8th. I visited him with Mr. Langton, and found

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was grounded were true; for the purloined paper was only a copy of an address from the Middlesex magistrates to the king (which was, from its very nature, destined for publication). And after all, there was no other proof that Steevens had taken this paper, than that it appeared in the *St. James's Chronicle* the day after Steevens had made a visit at Sir John's. Hawkins's act was unjustifiable, and the defence frivolous. It is observable, that there was no allusion to these circumstances in the *first edition* of Hawkins's work. — C.

(1) See *antè* Vol. VIII p. 407. — C.

him dictating to Mr. Strahan another will (1), the former being, as he had said at the time of making it, a temporary one. On our entering the room, he said, "God bless you both." I arrived just time enough to direct the execution, and also the attestation of it. After he had published it, he desired Mr. Strahan to say the Lord's Prayer, which he did, all of us joining. Johnson, after it, uttered, extempore, a few pious ejaculations.

9th. I saw him in the evening, and found him dictating to Mr. Strahan a codicil to the will he had made the evening before. I assisted them in it, and received from the testator a direction, to insert a devise to his executors of the house at Lichfield, to be sold for the benefit of certain of his relations, a bequest of sundry pecuniary and specific legacies, a provision for the annuity of 70*l.* for Francis, and, after all, a devise of all the rest, residue, and remainder of his estate and effects, to his executors, in trust for the said Francis Barber, his executors and administrators; and having dictated accordingly, Johnson executed and published it as a codicil to his will. (2)

He was now so weak as to be unable to kneel, and lamented that he must pray sitting; but, with an effort, he placed himself on his knees, while Mr. Strahan repeated the Lord's Prayer. During the whole of the

(1) There seems something odd in this affair of the will. Why did Johnson, after employing Sir J. Hawkins, a professional and in every other respect a proper person to draw up his will, throw it aside, and dictate another to a young clergyman? Had Sir J. Hawkins attempted to thwart the testator's intentions, which he tells us he disapproved of? or was this change the result of the scene of the 5th about the *secreted* books? In any case, it may have tended to produce that unfavourable temper towards Dr. Johnson which tinges the whole, and certainly discolours some passages of Sir J. Hawkins's book. — C.

(2) How much soever I approve of the practice of rewarding the fidelity of servants, I cannot but think that, in testamentary dispositions in their favour, some discretion ought to be exercised:

evening he was much composed and resigned. Being become very weak and helpless, it was thought necessary that a man should watch with him all night; and one was found in the neighbourhood, who, for half a crown a night, undertook to sit up with and assist him. When the man had left the room, he, in the presence and hearing of Mr. Strahan and Mr. Langton, asked me where I meant to bury him. I answered, doubtless, in Westminster Abbey: "If," said he, "my executors think it proper to mark the spot of my interment by a stone, let it be so placed as to protect my body from injury." I assured him it should be done. Before my departure, he desired Mr. Langton to put into my hands money to the amount of upwards of 100*l.* with a direction to keep it till called for.

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and that, in scarce any instance, they are to be preferred to those who are allied to the testator either in blood or by affinity. Of the merits of this servant, a judgment may be formed from what I shall hereafter have occasion to say of him. It was hinted to me many years ago, by his master, that he was a loose fellow; and I learned from others, that, after an absence from his service of some years, he married. In his search of a wife, he picked up one of those creatures with whom, in the disposal of themselves, no contrariety of colour is an obstacle. It is said, that soon after his marriage he became jealous, and, it may be supposed, that he continued so, till, by presenting him with a daughter of her own colour, his wife put an end to all his doubts on that score. Notwithstanding which, Johnson, in the excess of indiscriminating benevolence, about a year before his death, took the wife and her two children into his house, and made them a part of his family; and, by the codicil to his will, made a disposition in his favour, to the amount in value of near fifteen hundred pounds. — HAWKINS. — Several small causes contributed to make Sir J. Hawkins dislike Barber; who, in the kind of feud and rivalry between Sir John and Mr. Boswell, sided with the latter, and communicated to him the papers to which he, as residuary legatee, became entitled. It is painful to see in a man of Sir J. Hawkins's station, such rancour as prompted the imputation made in the foregoing note against the poor woman, Barber's wife, whose moral conduct, whatever it may have been, had surely nothing to do with Sir John Hawkins's squabbles with her husband. — C.

10th. This day at noon I saw him again. He said to me, that the male nurse to whose care I had committed him was unfit for the office. "He is," said he, "an idiot, as awkward as a turnspit just put into the wheel, and as sleepy as a dormouse." Mr. Cruikshank came into the room, and looking on his scarified leg, saw no sign of a mortification.

11th. At noon, I found him dozing, and would not disturb him.

12th. Saw him again; found him very weak, and, as he said, unable to pray.

13th. At noon I called at the house, but went not into his room, being told that he was dozing. I was further informed by the servants that his appetite was totally gone, and that he could take no sustenance. At eight in the evening of the same day, word was brought me by Mr. Sastres, to whom, in his last moments, he uttered these words, 'Jam moriturus,' that at a quarter past seven, he had, without a groan, or the least sign of pain or uneasiness, yielded his last breath.

At eleven, the same evening, Mr. Langton came to me, and, in an agony of mind, gave me to understand, that our friend had wounded himself in several parts of the body. I was shocked at the news; but, upon being told that he had not touched any vital part, was easily able to account for an action, which would else have given us the deepest concern. The fact was, that conceiving himself to be full of water, he had done that, which he had so often solicited his medical assistants to do, — made two or three incisions in his lower limbs, vainly hoping for some relief from the flux that might follow.

Early the next morning, Frank came to me; and, being desirous of knowing all the particulars of this transaction, I interrogated him very strictly concerning it, and received from him answers to the following effect: —

That, at eight in the morning of the preceding day, upon going into the bedchamber, his master, being in bed, ordered him to open a cabinet, and give him a drawer in it; that he did so, and that out of it his master took a case of lancets, and choosing one of them, would have conveyed it into the bed, which Frank and a young man that sat up with him seeing, they seized his hand, and entreated him not to do a rash action: he said he would not; but drawing his hand under the bed-clothes, they saw his arm move. Upon this they turned down the clothes, and saw a great effusion of blood, which soon stopped; that soon after, he got at a pair of scissors that lay in a drawer by him, and plunged them deep in the calf of each leg; that immediately they sent for Mr. Cruikshank and the apothecary, and they, or one of them, dressed the wounds; that he then fell into that dozing which carried him off; that it was conjectured he lost eight or ten ounces of blood; and that this effusion brought on the dozing, though his pulse continued firm till three o'clock.

That this act was not done to hasten (1) his end, but to discharge the water that he conceived to be in him, I have not the least doubt. A dropsy was his disease; he looked upon himself as a bloated carcass; and, to attain the power of easy respiration, would have undergone any degree of temporary pain. He dreaded neither punctures nor incisions, and, indeed, defied the trochar and the lancet; he had often reproached his physicians and surgeon with cowardice; and when Mr. Cruikshank scarified his leg, he cried out, "Deeper, deeper; I will abide the consequence: you are afraid

(1) The clumsy solemnity with which Hawkins thinks it necessary to defend Dr. Johnson from the suspicion of endeavouring to *shorten* his life by an act manifestly, avowedly, and even passionately meant to *prolong* it, is certainly very offensive; but it hardly, I think, justifies Mr. Boswell's suspicions (see *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 399.), that there was some malevolence at the bottom of the defence. — C.

of your reputation, but that is nothing to me." To those about him he said, "You all pretend to love me, but you do not love me so well as I myself do."

I have been thus minute in regarding the particulars of his last moments, because I wished to attract attention to the conduct of this great man, under the most trying circumstances human nature is subject to. Many persons have appeared possessed of more serenity of mind in this awful scene; some have remained unmoved at the dissolution of the vital union; and it may be deemed a discouragement from the severe practice of religion, that Dr. Johnson, whose whole life was a preparation for his death, and a conflict with natural infirmity, was disturbed with terror at the prospect of the grave. (1) Let not this relax the circumspection of any one. It is true, that natural firmness of spirit, or the confidence of hope, may buoy up the mind to the last; but, however heroic an undaunted death may appear, it is not what we should pray for. As Johnson lived the life of the righteous, his end was that of a Christian; he strictly fulfilled the injunction of the apostle, to work out his salvation with fear and trembling; and though his doubts and scruples were certainly very distressing to himself, they give his friends a pious hope, that he who added to almost all the virtues of Christianity that religious humility which its great teacher inculcated, will, in the fulness of time, receive the reward promised to a patient continuance in well-doing.

(1) Hawkins seems to confound two different periods. At the first appearance of danger, Dr. Johnson exhibited great, and perhaps gloomy anxiety, which, however, under the gradual effect of religious contemplations and devotional exercises, gave way to more comfortable hopes suggested by a lively faith in the propitiatory merits of his Redeemer. In this tranquillising disposition the last days of his life seem to have been passed, and in this Christian confidence it is believed that he died. — C.

PART III.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON.

BY THOMAS TYERS, ESQ. (1)

[Published in 1785.]

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286. *Christopher Smart.*

CHRISTOPHER SMART was at first well received by Johnson. I owe my acquaintance with him, which lasted thirty years, to the introduction of that bard. Johnson, whose hearing was not always good, understood Smart to call me by the name of Thyer, that eminent scholar, librarian of Manchester, and a nonjuror. This mistake was rather beneficial than otherwise to me. Johnson had been much indisposed all that day, and repeated a psalm he had just translated, during his affliction, into Latin verse, and did not commit it to paper. For so retentive was his memory, that he could always recover whatever he lent to that faculty. Smart, in return, re-

(1) Mr. Tyers very modestly calls his pamphlet a Sketch; and he certainly writes, as Mr. Boswell says, in a careless and desultory style; but there seems, on examination, no reason to doubt the accuracy of his facts; indeed, all the other biographers have either borrowed from Tyers, or have told the same stories in the same way as he has done, and thus vouched for his general accuracy.— C.— [For Boswell's account of "Tom Tyers," as Johnson always called him, see *ante*, Vol. VII. p. 156. He is the "Tom Restless" of the 48th "Idler." See *ante*, Vol. III. p. 116.]

cited some of his own Latin compositions. He had translated with success, and to Mr. Pope's satisfaction, his "St. Cecilian Ode."

287. *Music.* — *Painting.*

Though Johnson composed so harmoniously in Latin and English, he had no ear for music; and though he lived in such habits of intimacy with Sir Joshua Reynolds, and once intended to have written the lives of the painters, he had no eye, nor perhaps taste, for a picture or a landscape.

288. *Reading.*

Johnson preferred conversation to books; but when driven to the refuge of reading by being left alone, he then attached himself to that amusement. By his innumerable quotations, one would suppose, that he must have read more books than any man in England; but he declared that supposition was a mistake in his favour. He owned he had hardly read a book through. Churchhill used to say, having heard perhaps of his confession, as a boast, that "if Johnson had only read a few books, he could not be the author of his own works." His opinion, however, was, that he who reads most, has the chance of knowing most; but he declared, that the perpetual task of reading was as bad as the slavery in the mine, or the labour at the oar.

289. *Greek.*

He owned that many knew more Greek than himself; but his grammar, he said, would show that he had once taken pains. Sir William Jones, one of the most enlightened of the sons of men, as Johnson described him, has often declared, that he knew a great deal of Greek. (1)

(1) [On the subject of Johnson's skill in Greek, see *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 389.]

290. *Churchill.—Cock Lane Ghost.*

Churchill challenged Johnson to combat; satire the weapon. Johnson never took up the gauntlet or replied; for he thought it unbecoming him to defend himself against an author who might be resolved to have the last word. He was content to let his enemies feed upon him as long as they could. I have heard Churchill declare, that he thought Johnson's poems of 'London,' and the 'Vanity of Human Wishes,' full of admirable verses, and that all his compositions were diamonds of the first water; but he wanted a subject for his pen and for raillery, and so introduced Pomposo into his descriptions; "for, with other wise folks, he sat up with the Ghost."

291. *Tea.*

Come when you would, early or late (for he desired to be called from bed, when a visitor was at the door), the tea-table was sure to be spread, "*TE veniente die, TE decedente.*" With tea he cheered himself in the morning; with tea, he solaced himself in the evening; for in these, or in equivalent words, he expressed himself in a printed letter to Jonas Hanway (1), who had just told the public, that tea was the ruin of the nation, and of the nerves of every one who drank it. The pun upon his favourite liquor he heard with a smile.

292. *Streatham.—Mrs. Thrale.*

Johnson formed at Streatham a room for a library, and increased by his recommendation the number of books. Here he was to be found (himself a library), when a friend called upon him; and by him the friend was sure to be introduced to the dinner-table, which

(1) [Johnson, in his review of Hanway's "Essay on Tea," describes himself as "a hardened and shameless tea-drinker, whose kettle has scarcely time to cool; who with tea amuses the evening, with tea solaces the midnight, and with tea welcomes the morning." See *antè*, Vol. II. p. 67.]

Mrs. Thrale knew how [illegible] utmost plenty and elegance; [illegible] with such guests, that to di[illegible]ulis accumbere divum. Of Mrs. Thrale, [illegible]ll, less cannot be said, than that, in one [illegible] opinions of Dr. Johnson, "if she was not the wisest woman in the world, she was undoubtedly one of the wittiest." Besides a natural vivacity in conversation, she had reading enough, and the "gods had made her poetical." Her poem of "The Three Warnings" (the subject she owned not to be original) is highly interesting and serious, and literally comes home to every body's business and bosom. She took, or caused such care to be taken, of Johnson, during an illness of continuance, that Goldsmith told her, "he owed his recovery to her attention." She moreover taught him to lay up something of his income every year.

293. *The Dictionary — and Rambler.*

During the printing of his Dictionary, the Ramblers came out periodically; for he could do more than one thing at a time. He declared, that he wrote them by way of relief from his application to his Dictionary, and for the reward. He told me, that he had no expectation they would have been so much read and admired. What was amusement to him was instruction to others. Goldsmith declared, that a system of morals might be drawn from these essays: this idea has been taken up and executed by a publication in an alphabetical series of moral maxims. (1)

294. *Levett's Epitaph.*

His dependant, Levett, died suddenly under his roof. He preserved his name from oblivion, by writing an epitaph for him (2), which shows that his poetical fire

(1) ["The Beauties of Johnson." See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 250.]
(2) [See *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 122.]

was not extinguished, and is so appropriate, that it could belong to no other person in the world. Johnson said, that the remark of appropriation was just criticism: his friend was induced to pronounce, that he would not have so good an epitaph written for himself. Pope has nothing equal to it in his sepulchral poetry.

295. *Johnson's Library.*

Johnson had a large but not a splendid library, near five thousand volumes. Many authors, not in hostility with him, presented him with their works. But his study did not contain half his books. He possessed the chair that belonged to the Ciceronian Dr. King of Oxford, which was given him by his friend Vansittart. It answers the purposes of reading and writing, by night or by day; and is as valuable in all respects as the chair of Ariosto, as delineated in the preface to Hoole's liberal translation of that poet. Since the rounding of this period, intelligence is brought, that this literary chair is purchased by Mr. Hoole. Relics are venerable things, and are only not to be worshipped. On the reading-chair of Mr. Speaker Onslow, a part of this historical sketch was written.

296. *Late Hours.*

Night was his time for composition. Indeed, he literally turned night into day, *Noctes vigilabat ad ipsum mane*; but not like Tigellius in Horace. Perhaps he never was a good sleeper, and, while all the rest of the world was in bed, he chose his lamp, in the words of Milton, —

— "in midnight hour
Were seen in some high lonely tower."

He wrote and lived perhaps at one time only from day to day, and, according to vulgar expression, from sheet to sheet. There is cause to believe, he would not have written unless under the pressure of necessity.

"*Magister artis ingeniique largitor venter*," says Persius. He wrote to live, and, luckily for mankind, lived a great many years to write.

297. *Strong Liquors.*

It never was said of him, that he was overtaken with liquor,— a declaration Bishop Hoadly makes of himself. But he owned, that he drank his bottle at a certain time of life. Like Solomon, who tried so many things for curiosity and delight, he renounced strong liquors; and he might have said, as that king is made to do by Prior, —

> "I drank, I liked it not; 'twas rage, 'twas noise,
> An airy scene of transitory joys."

298. *Rapid Composition.*

He asserted, and valued himself upon it, that he wrote the "Life of Savage" in six and thirty hours. In one night he also composed, after finishing an evening in Holborn, his "Hermit of Teneriffe." He sat up a whole night to compose the preface to the "Preceptor."

299. *Gesticulations.*

Though he seemed to be athletic as Milo himself, and in his younger days performed several feats of activity, he was to the last a *convulsionary*. He has often stepped aside to let nature do what she would with him. His gestures, which were a degree of St. Vitus's dance, in the street attracted the notice of many — the stare of the vulgar, but the compassion of the better sort. I have often looked another way, as the companions of Peter the Great were used to do while he was under the short paroxysm. (1)

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. I p. 161. and Vol. IV. p. 9.]

300. Conversation.

Though his time seemed to be bespoke, and quite engrossed, his house was always open to all his acquaintance, new and old. His amanuensis has given up his pen, the printer's devil has waited on the stairs for a proof sheet, and the press has often stood still, while his visitors were delighted and instructed. No subject ever came amiss to him. He could transfer his thoughts from one thing to another with the most accommodating facility. He had the art, for which Locke was famous, of leading people to talk on their favourite subjects, and on what they knew best. By this he acquired a great deal of information. What he once heard he rarely forgot. They gave him their best conversation, and he generally made them pleased with themselves, for endeavouring to please him.

Poet Smart used to relate, " that his first conversation with Johnson was of such variety and length, that it began with poetry and ended at fluxions." He always talked as if he was talking upon oath. He was the wisest person, and had the most knowledge in ready cash that I ever had the honour to be acquainted with. Johnson's advice was consulted on all occasions. He was known to be a good casuist, and therefore had many cases submitted for his judgment. His conversation, in the judgment of several, was thought to be equal to his correct writings. Perhaps the tongue will throw out more animated expressions than the pen. He said the most common things in the newest manner. He always commanded attention and regard. His person, though unadorned with dress, and even deformed by neglect, made you expect something, and you were hardly ever disappointed. His manner was interesting: the tone of his voice, and the sincerity of his expressions, even when they did not captivate your affections, or carry conviction, prevented contempt. If the line, by Pope,

on his father, can be [illegible] to Johnson, it is characteristic of him, who never swore, nor told a lie. If the first part is not confined to the oath of allegiance (1), it will be useful to insert it: —

"Nor dared an oath, nor hazarded a lie."

It must be owned, his countenance, on some occasions, resembled too much the medallic likeness of Magliabechi (2), as exhibited before the printed account of him by Mr. Spence. No man dared to take liberties with him, nor flatly contradict him; for he could repel any attack, having always about him the weapons of ridicule, of wit, and of argument. It must be owned, that some who had the desire to be admitted to him thought him too dogmatical, and as exacting too much homage to his opinions, and came no more. For they said while he presided in his library, surrounded by his admirers, he would, "like Cato, give his little senate laws."

301. *Knowledge of Life.*

He had great knowledge in the science of human nature, and of the fashions and customs of life, and knew the world well. He had often in his mouth this line of Pope: —

"The proper study of mankind is man."

He was desirous of surveying life in all its modes and forms, and in all climates. He once offered to attend his friend Vansittart (3) to India, who was invited there

(1) Mr. Tyers seems to mean that the oath of allegiance is the only justifiable oath; and in allusion, perhaps, to Johnson's political principles, he insinuates, that even *that* oath he would not have willingly taken. — C.

(2) Librarian to the Grand Dukes of Florence, and celebrated for vast erudition and extreme slovenliness. He died in 1714, aged 80. — C.

(3) Dr. Johnson had some thoughts of going to India with another friend (Mr. Fowke, see *ante*, Vol. VI. p. 136.); but this proposition as to Mr. Vansittart, is nowhere else, that I have

to make a fortune; but it did not take place. He talked much of travelling into Poland, to observe the life of the Palatines, the account of which struck his curiosity very much.

302. *Johnson's Benevolence.*

His benevolence to mankind was known to all who knew him. Though he declared a friend to the church of England, and even a friend to the convocation, it assuredly was not in his wish to persecute for speculative notions. He used to say, he had no quarrel with any order of men, unless they disbelieved in revelation and a future state. He would, indeed, have sided with Sacheverell against Daniel Burgess, if he thought the church was in danger. His hand and his heart were always open to charity. The objects under his own roof were only a few of the subjects for relief. He was ever at the head of subscription in cases of distress. His guinea, as he said of another man of a bountiful disposition, was always ready. He wrote an exhortation to public bounty. He drew up a paper to recommend the French prisoners, in the last war but one, to the English benevolence; which was of service. He implored the hand of benevolence for others, even when he almost seemed a proper object of it himself.

303. *Johnson's Eyesight.*

His eyesight was not good; but he never wore spectacles; not on account of such a ridiculous vow as Swift made not to use them, but because he was assured they would be of no service to him. He once declared

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seen, alluded to. Dr. Vansittart, of Oxford, was a great friend of Johnson's, and it is possible that he may have been invited by his younger brother, Mr. Henry Vansittart, when governor of Bengal, to join him in India; and Dr. Vansittart might perhaps have had some idea of including Johnson in the arrangement.—C.

that he "never saw the human face divine." He saw better with one eye than the other.(1) Latterly, perhaps, he meant to save his eyes, and did not read so much as he otherwise would.

304. *Tour to Italy.—Dr. Brocklesby.—Lord Thurlow.*

Johnson, in 1783, meditated a tour into Italy or Portugal, for the sake of the climate. But Dr. Brocklesby, his friend and physician, conjured him, by every argument in his power, not to go abroad in the state of his health; but, if he was resolved on the first, and wished for something additional to his income, desired he would permit him to accommodate him out of his fortune with one hundred pounds a year, during his travels. The reply to this generosity was to this effect:—"That he would not be obliged to any person's liberality, but to his king's." The continuance of this desire to go abroad occasioned the application for an increase of pension. that is so honourable to those who applied for it, and to the lord chancellor, who gave him leave to draw on his banker for any sum. At last he said, "If I am worse, I cannot go; if I am better, I need not go; but if I continue neither better nor worse, I am as well where I am."

305. *Johnson's Death.*

Johnson was all his life preparing himself for death: but particularly in the last stage of his asthma and

(1) ["Mr. Tyers informs us" (says a writer in the Gent. Mag. v. liv. p. 998., probably Mr. Steevens), "that Dr. Johnson saw better with one eye than the other, but forbears to account for this unequal ability in his organs of sight. I beg therefore at once to supply his deficiency, and confirm his valuable anecdote, by assuring him his late friend had, for many years, lost one of his eyes, and consequently could only see with its companion. He himself did not recollect the exact period when he became acquainted with this visual defect, which, as it happened through no external violence, might, for some time, have escaped even his own observation."]

dropsy. "Take care of your soul — don't live such a life as I have done — don't let your business or dissipation make you neglect your sabbath" — were now his constant inculcations. Private and public prayer, when his visitors were his audience, were his constant exercises. 'He died with a quiet and silent expiration," to use his own words on Milton, and this funeral was splendidly and numerously attended. The friends of the Doctor were happy on his easy departure, for they apprehended he might have died hard. At the end of this sketch, it may be hinted, that Johnson told me — for he saw I always had my eye and my ear upon him — that, at some time or other, I might be called upon to assist a posthumous account of him.

Part IV.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON,

BY J. HOOLE, ESQ. (1)

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306. *Johnson's Last Illness.*

Saturday, Nov. 20. 1784. — This evening, about eight o'clock, I paid a visit to my dear friend Dr. Johnson, whom I found very ill and in great dejection of spirits. We had a most affecting conversation on the subject of religion, in which he exhorted me, with the greatest warmth of kindness, to attend closely to every religious duty, and particularly enforced the obligation

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 407.]

of private prayer and receiving the sacrament. He desired me to stay that night and join in prayer with him; adding, that he always went to prayer every night with his man Francis. He conjured me to read and meditate upon the Bible, and not to throw it aside for a play or a novel. He said he had himself lived in great negligence of religion and worship for forty years; that he had neglected to read his Bible, and had often reflected what he could hereafter say when he should be asked why he had not read it. He begged me repeatedly to let his present situation have due effect upon me; and advised me, when I got home, to note down in writing what had passed between us, adding, that what a man writes in that manner dwells upon his mind. He said many things that I cannot now recollect, but all delivered with the utmost fervour of religious zeal and personal affection. Between nine and ten o'clock his servant Francis came up stairs: he then said we would all go to prayers, and, desiring me to kneel down by his bed-side, he repeated several prayers with great devotion. I then took my leave.' He then pressed me to think of all he had said, and to commit it to writing. I assured him I would. He seized my hand with much warmth, and repeated, "Promise me you will do it:" on which we parted, and I engaged to see him the next day.

Sunday, Nov. 21.—About noon I again visited him; found him rather better and easier, his spirits more raised, and his conversation more disposed to general subjects. When I came in, he asked if I had done what he desired (meaning the noting down what passed the night before); and upon my saying that I had, he pressed my hand and said earnestly, "Thank you." Our discourse then grew more cheerful. He told me, with apparent pleasure, that he heard the Empress of Russia had ordered "The Rambler" to be translated into the Russian language, and that a copy would be sent

him.(1) Before we parted, he put into my hands a little book, by Fleetwood, on the Sacrament, which he told me he had been the means of introducing to the University of Oxford by recommending it to a young student there.

Monday, Nov. 22. — Visited the Doctor: found him seemingly better of his complaints, but extremely low and dejected. I sat by him till he fell a asleep, and soon after left him, as he seemed little disposed to talk; and, on my going away, he said, emphatically, "I am very poorly indeed!"

Tuesday, Nov. 23. — Called about eleven; the Doctor not up: Mr. Gardiner (2) in the dining-room: the Doctor soon came to us, and seemed more cheerful than the day before. He spoke of his design to invite a Mrs. Hall (3) to be with him, and to offer her Mrs. Williams's room. Called again about three: found him quite oppressed with company that morning, therefore left him directly.

Wednesday, Nov. 24. — Called about seven in the evening: found him very ill and very low indeed. He said a thought had struck him that his rapid decline of health and strength might be partly owing to the town air, and spoke of getting a lodging at Islington. I sat with him till past nine, and then took my leave.

Thursday, Nov. 25. — About three in the afternoon was told that he had desired that day to see no company. In the evening, about eight, called with Mr. Nicol (4), and, to our great surprise, we found him then setting out for Islington, to the Rev. Mr. Strahan's. He could scarce speak. We went with him down the court to the coach. He was accompanied by his servant Frank and

(1) [See *antè*, p. 123.]

(2) No doubt an error of the press for *Mrs.* Gardiner. — C.

(3) Sister of the Rev. John Wesley. See *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 68. — C.

(4) Mr. George Nicol, of Pall Mall. — J. Hoole.

Mr. Lowe the painter. I offered myself to go with him, but he declined it.'"

Friday, Nov. 26. — Called at his house about eleven; heard he was much better, and had a better night than he had known a great while, and was expected home that day. Called again in the afternoon — not so well as he was, nor expected home that night.

Saturday, Nov. 27. — Called again, about noon; heard he was much worse; went immediately to Islington, where I found him extremely bad, and scarce able to speak, with the asthma. Sir John Hawkins, the Rev. Mr. Strahan, and Mrs. Strahan, were with him. Observing that we said little, he desired that we would not constrain ourselves, though he was not able to talk with us. Soon after he said he had something to say to Sir John Hawkins, on which we immediately went down into the parlour. Sir John soon followed us, and said he had been speaking about his will. Sir John started the idea of proposing to him to make it on the spot, that Sir John should dictate it, and that I should write it. He went up to propose it, and soon came down with the Doctor's acceptance. The will was then begun, but before we proceeded far, it being necessary, on account of some alteration, to begin again, Sir John asked the Doctor whether he would choose to make any introductory declaration respecting his faith. The Doctor said he would. Sir John further asked if he would make any declaration of his being of the church of England; to which the Doctor said "*No!*" but, taking a pen, he wrote on a paper the following words, which he delivered to Sir John, desiring him to keep it: — "I commit to the infinite mercies of Almighty God my soul, polluted with many sins, but purified, I trust, with repentance and the death of Jesus Christ." While he was at Mr. Strahan's, Dr. Brocklesby came in, and Dr. Johnson put the question to him, whether he thought he could live six weeks? to which Dr. Brock-

lesby returned a very doubtful answer, and soon left me. After dinner the will was finished, and about six we came to town in Sir John Hawkins's carriage; Sir John, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Ryland (who came in after dinner), and myself. The Doctor appeared much better in the way home, and talked pretty cheerfully. Sir John took leave of us at the end of Bolt Court, and Mr. Ryland and myself went to his house with the Doctor, who began to grow very ill again. Mr. Ryland soon left us, and I remained with the Doctor till Mr. Sastres came in. We stayed with him about an hour, when we left him on his saying he had some business to do. Mr. Sastres and myself went together homewards, discoursing on the dangerous state of our friend, when it was resolved that Mr. Sastres should write to Dr. Heberden; but going to his house that night, he fortunately found him at home, and he promised to be with Dr. Johnson next morning.

Sunday, Nov. 28. — Went to Dr. Johnson's about two o'clock: met Mrs. Hoole coming from thence, as he was asleep: took her back with me: found Sir John Hawkins with him. The Doctor's conversation tolerably cheerful. Sir John reminded him that he had expressed a desire to leave some small memorials to his friends, particularly a Polyglot Bible to Mr. Langton; and asked if they should add the codicil then. The Doctor replied, "he had forty things to add, but could not do it at that time." Sir John then took his leave. Mr. Sastres came next into the dining-room, where I was with Mrs. Hoole. Dr. Johnson hearing that Mrs. Hoole was in the next room, desired to see her. He received her with great affection, took her by the hand, and said nearly these words: — "I feel great tenderness for you: think of the situation in which you see me, profit by it, and God Almighty keep you for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen." He then asked if we would both stay and dine with him. Mrs. Hoole said she

could not; but I agreed to stay. Upon my saying to the Doctor that Dr. Heberden would be with him that morning, his answer was, "God has called me, and Dr. Heberden comes too late." Soon after this Dr Heberden came. While he was there, we heard them, from the other room, in earnest discourse, and found that they were talking over the affair (1) of the K—g and C———n. (2) We overheard Dr. Heberden say, "All you did was extremely proper." After Dr. Heberden was gone, Mr. Sastres and I returned into the chamber. Dr. Johnson complained that sleep this day had powerful dominion over him, that he waked with great difficulty, and that probably he should go off in one of these paroxysms. Afterwards he said that he hoped his sleep was the effect of opium taken some days before, which might not be worked off. We dined together—the Doctor, Mr. Sastres, Mrs. Davies, and myself. He ate a pretty good dinner with seeming appetite, but appearing rather impatient; and being asked unnecessary and frivolous questions, he said he often thought of Macbeth, — "Question enrages him." He retired immediately after dinner, and we soon went, at his desire (Mr. Sastres and myself), and sat with him till tea. He said little, but dozed at times. At six he ordered tea for us, and we went out to drink it with Mrs. Davies; but the Doctor drank none. The Rev. Dr. Taylor, of Ashbourne, came soon after; and Dr. Johnson desired our attendance at prayers, which were read by Dr. Taylor. Mr. Ryland came and sat some time with him: he thought him much better. Mr. Sastres and I continued with him the remainder of the evening, when he exhorted Mr. Sastres in nearly these

(1) This alludes to an application made for an increase to his pension, to enable him to go to Italy. — J. Hoole.

(2) *Sic*; but probably an error of the press for C———r, meaning the King and Lord Chancellor: see *ante*, Vol. VIII. p. 353 — C.

words:—"There is no one who has shown me more attention than you have done, and it is now right you should claim some attention from me. You are a young man, and are to struggle through life: you are in a profession that I dare say you will exercise with great fidelity and innocence; but let me exhort you always to think of my situation, which must one day be yours: always remember that life is short, and that eternity never ends! I say nothing of your religion; for if you conscientiously keep to it, I have little doubt but you may be saved: if you read the controversy, I think we have the right on our side; but if you do not read it, be not persuaded, from any worldly consideration, to alter the religion in which you were educated: change not, but from conviction of reason." He then most strongly enforced the motives of virtue and piety from the consideration of a future state of reward and punishment, and concluded with, "Remember all this, and God bless you! Write down what I have said — I think you are the third person I have bid do this." (1) At ten o'clock he dismissed us, thanking us for a visit which he said could not have been very pleasant to us.

Monday, Nov. 29. — Called with my son about eleven: saw the Doctor, who said, "You must not now stay;" but, as we were going away, he said, "I will get Mr. Hoole to come next Wednesday and read the Litany to me, and do you and Mrs. Hoole come with him." He appeared very ill. Returning from the city I called again to inquire, and heard that Dr. Butter was with him. In the evening, about eight, called again, and just saw him; but did not stay, as Mr. Langton was with him on business. I met Sir Joshua Reynolds going away.

Tuesday, Nov. 30. — Called twice this morning, but

(1) The other two were Dr. Brocklesby and myself. — J. Hoole.

did not see him: he was much the same. In the evening, between six and seven, went to his house: found there Mr. Langton, Mr. Sastres, and Mr. Ryland: the Doctor being asleep in the chamber, we went all to tea and coffee; when the Doctor came in to us rather cheerful, and entering said, "Dear gentlemen, how do you do?" He drank coffee, and, in the course of the conversation, said that he recollected a poem of his, made some years ago on a young gentleman coming of age.(1) He repeated the whole with great spirit: it consisted of about fifteen or sixteen stanzas of four lines, in alternate rhyme. He said he had only repeated it once since he composed it, and that he never gave but one copy. He said several excellent things that evening, and among the rest, that "scruples made many men miserable, but few men good." He spoke of the affectation that men had to accuse themselves of petty faults or weaknesses, in order to exalt themselves into notice for any extraordinary talents which they might possess; and instanced Waller, which he said he would record if he lived to revise his life. Waller was accustomed to say that his memory was so bad he would sometimes forget to repeat his grace at table, or the Lord's Prayer, perhaps that people might wonder at what he did else of great moment; for the Doctor observed, that no man takes upon himself small blemishes without supposing that great abilities are attributed to him; and that, in short, this affectation of candour or modesty was but another kind of indirect self-praise, and had its foundation in vanity. Frank bringing him a note, as he opened it he said an odd thought struck him, that "one should receive no letters in the grave."(2)

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 414.]

(2) This note was from Mr. Davies the bookseller, and mentioned a present of some pork; upon which the Doctor said, in a manner that seemed as if he thought it ill-timed, "Too much of this," or some such expression.—J. Hoole.

His talk was in general very serious and devout, though occasionally cheerful: he said, "You are all serious men, and I will tell you something. About two years since I feared that I had neglected God, and that then I had not a *mind* to give him; on which I set about to read Thomas à Kempis in Low Dutch, which I accomplished, and thence I judged that my mind was not impaired, Low Dutch having no affinity with any of the languages which I knew." With respect to his recovery, he seemed to think it hopeless. There was to be a consultation of physicians next day: he wished to have his legs scarified to let out the water; but this his medical friends opposed, and he submitted to their opinion, though he said he was not satisfied. At half past eight he dismissed us all but Mr. Langton. I first asked him if my son should attend him next day, to read the Litany, as he had desired; but he declined it on account of the expected consultation. We went away, leaving Mr. Langton and Mr. Desmoulins, a young man who was employed in copying his Latin epigrams.

Wednesday, Dec. 1. — At his house in the evening: drank tea and coffee with Mr. Sastres, Mr. Desmoulins, and Mr. Hall (1): went into the Doctor's chamber after tea, when he gave me an epitaph to copy, written by him for his father, mother, and brother. He continued much the same.

Thursday, Dec. 2. — Called in the morning, and left the epitaph: with him in the evening about seven; found Mr. Langton and Mr. Desmoulins; did not see the Doctor; he was in his chamber, and afterwards engaged with Dr. Scott.

Friday Dec. 3. — Called; but he wished not to see any body. Consultations of physicians to be held that day: called again in the evening; found Mr. Langton

(1) Probably a mistake for *Mrs.* Hall. — C.

with him; Mr. Sastres and I went together into his chamber; he was extremely low. "I am very bad indeed, dear gentlemen," he said; "very bad, very low, very cold, and I think I find my life to fail." In about a quarter of an hour he dismissed Mr. Sastres and me; but called me back again, and said that next Sunday, if he lived, he designed to take the sacrament, and wished me, my wife, and son to be there. We left Mr. Langton with him.

Saturday, Dec. 4. — Called on him about three: he was much the same; did not see him, he had much company that day. Called in the evening with Mr. Sastres about eight; found he was not disposed for company; Mr. Langton with him; did not see him.

Sunday, Dec. 5. — Went to Bolt Court with Mrs. Hoole after eleven; found there Sir John Hawkins, Rev. Mr. Strahan, Mrs. Gardiner, and Mr. Desmoulins, in the dining-room. After some time the Doctor came to us from the chamber, and saluted us all, thanking us all for this visit to him. He said he found himself very bad, but hoped he should go well through the duty which he was about to do. The sacrament was then administered to all present, Frank being of the number. The Doctor repeatedly desired Mr. Strahan to speak louder; seeming very anxious not to lose any part of the service, in which he joined in very great fervour of devotion. The service over, he again thanked us all for attending him on the occasion; he said he had taken some opium to enable him to support the fatigue: he seemed quite spent, and lay in his chair some time in a kind of doze: he then got up and retired into his chamber. Mr. Ryland then called on him. I was with them: he said to Mr. Ryland, "I have taken my viaticum: I hope I shall arrive safe at the end of my journey, and be accepted at last." He spoke very despondingly several times: Mr. Ryland comforted him, observing that "we had great hopes given us." "Yes," he replied, "we have

hopes give us; but they are conditional, and I know not how far I have fulfilled those conditions." (1) He afterwards said, "However, I think that I have now corrected all bad and vicious habits." Sir Joshua Reynolds called on him: we left them together. Sir Joshua being gone, he called Mr. Ryland and me again to him: he continued talking very seriously, and repeated a prayer or collect with great fervour, when Mr. Ryland took his leave. He ate a tolerable dinner, but retired directly after dinner. My son came to us from his church: we were at dinner — Dr. Johnson, Mrs. Gardiner, myself, Mrs. Hoole, my son, and Mr. Desmoulins. He had looked out a sermon of Dr. Clarke's, "On the Shortness of Life," for me me to read to him after dinner, but he was too ill to hear it. After six o'clock he called us all into his room, when he dismissed us for that night with a prayer, delivered as he sat in his great chair in the most fervent and affecting manner, his mind appearing wholly employed with the thoughts of another life. He told Mr. Ryland that he wished not to come to God with opium, but that he hoped he had been properly attentive. He said before us all, that when he recovered the last spring, he had only called it a *reprieve*, but that he did think it was for a longer time; however he hoped the time that had been prolonged to him might be the means of bringing forth fruit meet for repentance.

Monday, Dec. 6. — Sent in the morning to make inquiry after him: he was much the same: called in the evening; found Mr. Cruikshanks the Surgeon with him: he said he had been that day quarrelling with all his physicians: he appeared in tolerable spirits.

Tuesday, Dec. 7. — Called at dinner time: saw him eat a very good dinner: he seemed rather better, and in spirits.

(1) See his letter to Mrs. Thrale, Vol. II. p. 350. — J. Hoole.

Wednesday, Dec. 8. — Went with Mrs. Hoole and my son, by appointment: found him very poorly and low, after a very bad night. Mr. Nichols the printer was there. My son read the Litany, the Doctor several times urging him to speak louder. After prayers Mr. Langton came in: much serious discourse: he warned us all to profit by his situation; and, applying to me, who stood next him, exhorted me to lead a better life than he had done. "A better life than you, my dear Sir!" I repeated. He replied warmly, "Don't compliment now." He told Mr. Langton that he had the night before enforced on ——— (1) a powerful argument to a powerful objection against Christianity.

He had often thought it might seem strange that the Jews, who refused belief to the doctrine supported by the miracles of our Saviour, should after his death raise a numerous church; but he said that they expected fully a temporal prince, and with this idea the multitude was actuated when they strewed his way with palm-branches on his entry into Jerusalem; but finding their expectations afterwards disappointed, rejected him, till in process of time, comparing all the circumstances and prophecies of the Old Testament, confirmed in the New, many were converted; that the Apostles themselves once believed him to be a temporal prince. He said that he had always been struck with the resemblance of the Jewish passover and the Christian doctrine of redemption. He thanked us all for our attendance, and we left him with Mr. Langton.

Thursday, Dec. 9. — Called in the evening; did not see him, as he was engaged.

Friday, Dec. 10. — Called about eleven in the morning; saw Mr. La Trobe there: neither of us saw

(1) Probably Mr. Windham; see his Journal, *post*, p. 308. The word *He*, in the next sentence, means not Mr. Windham, but Dr. Johnson. — C.

the Doctor, as we understood, he wished not to be visited that day. In the evening I sent him a letter, recommending Dr. Dalloway (an irregular physician) as an extraordinary person for curing the dropsy. He returned me a verbal answer that he was obliged to me, but that it was too late. My son read prayers with him this day.

Saturday, Dec. 11. — Went to Bolt Court about twelve; met there Dr. Burney, Dr. Taylor, Sir John Hawkins, Mr. Sastres, Mr. Paradise, Count Zenobia, and Mr. Langton. Mrs. Hoole called for me there: we both went to him: he received us very kindly; told me he had my letter, but "it was too late for doctors, *regular* or *irregular*." His physicians had been with him that day, but prescribed nothing. Mr. Cruikshanks came: the Doctor was rather cheerful with him; he said, "Come, give me your hand," and shook him by the hand, adding, "You shall make no other use of it now; meaning he should not examine his legs. Mr. Cruikshanks wished to do it, but the Doctor would not let him. Mr. Cruikshanks said he would call in the evening.

Sunday, Dec. 12. — Was not at Bolt Court in the forenoon; at St. Sepulchre's school in the evening with Mrs. Hoole, where we saw Mrs. Gardiner and Lady Rothes; heard that Dr. Johnson was very bad, and had been something delirious. Went to Bolt Court about nine, and found there Mr. Windham and the Rev. Mr. Strahan. The Doctor was then very bad in bed, which I think he had only taken to that day: he had now refused to take any more medicine or food. Mr. Cruikshanks came about eleven: he endeavoured to persuade him to take some nourishment, but in vain. Mr. Windham then went again to him, and, by the advice of Mr. Cruikshanks, put it upon this footing — that by persisting to refuse all sustenance he might probably defeat his own purpose *to preserve his mind clear*, as his

weakness might bring on paralytic complaints that might affect his mental powers. The Doctor, Mr. Windham said, heard him patiently; but when he had heard all, he desired to be troubled no more. He then took a most affectionate leave of Mr. Windham, who reported to us the issue of the conversation, for only Mr. Desmoulins was with them in the chamber. I did not see the Doctor that day, being fearful of disturbing him, and never conversed with him again. I came away about half-past eleven with Mr. Windham.

Monday, Dec. 13. — Went to Bolt Court at eleven o'clock in the morning; met a young lady coming down stairs from the Doctor, whom, upon inquiry, I found to be Miss Morris (a sister to Miss Morris, formerly on the stage). Mrs. Desmoulins told me that she had seen the Doctor; that by her desire he had been told she came to ask his blessing, and that he said, "God bless you!" I then went up into his chamber, and found him lying very composed in a kind of doze: he spoke to nobody. Sir John Hawkins, Mr. Langton, Mrs. Gardiner, Rev. Mr. Strahan and Mrs. Strahan, Doctors Brocklesby and Butter, Mr. Steevens, and Mr. Nichols the printer, came; but no one chose to disturb him by speaking to him, and he seemed to take no notice of any person. While Mrs. Gardiner and I were there, before the rest came, he took a little warm milk in a cup, when he said something upon its not being properly given into his hand: he breathed very regular, though short, and appeared to be mostly in a calm sleep or dozing. I left him in this state, and never more saw him alive. In the evening I supped with Mrs. Hoole and my son at Mr. Braithwaite's, and at night my servant brought me word that my dearest friend died that evening about seven o'clock: and next morning I went to the house, where I met Mr. Seward; we went together into the chamber, and there saw the most awful sight of Dr. Johnson laid out in his bed, without life!

PART V.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON, BY GEORGE STEEVENS, ESQ. (1)

[Published in 1785.]

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307. *Johnson and Richardson.*

DR. JOHNSON confessed himself to have been sometimes in the power of bailiffs. Richardson, the author of "Clarissa," was his constant friend on such occasions. "I remember writing to him," said Johnson, "from a sponging house; and was so sure of my deliverance through his kindness and liberality, that, before his reply was brought, I knew I could afford to joke with the rascal who had me in custody, and did so, over a pint of adulterated wine, for which, at that instant, I had no money to pay."

308. *Eyesight. — Spectacles.*

It has been observed, that Johnson had lost the sight of one of his eyes. Mr. Ellis, an ancient gentleman (author of a very happy burlesque translation of the thirteenth book, added to the Æneid by Maffei Vegio), was in the same condition; but, some years after, while he was at Margate, the sight of his eye unexpectedly

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 325.]

returned, and that of its fellow became as suddenly extinguished. Concerning the particulars of this singular but authenticated event, Dr. Johnson was studiously inquisitive, and not without reference to his own case. Though he never made use of glasses to assist his sight, he said he could recollect no production of art to which man has superior obligations. He mentioned the name of the original inventor (1) of spectacles with reverence, and expressed his wonder that not an individual, out of the multitudes who had profited by them, had, through gratitude, written the life of so great a benefactor to society.

309. *Pope's "Messiah."*

"I have been told, Dr. Johnson," says a friend, "that your translation of Pope's 'Messiah' was made either as a common exercise or as an imposition for some negligence you had been guilty of at college." "No, Sir," replied the Doctor: "at Pembroke the former were always in prose, and to the latter I would not have submitted. I wrote it rather to show the tutors what I could do, than what I was willing should be done. It answered my purpose; for it convinced those who were well enough inclined to punish me, that I could wield a scholar's weapon, as often as I was menaced with arbitrary inflictions. Before the frequency of personal satire had weakened its effect, the petty tyrants of colleges stood in awe of a pointed remark, or a vindictive epigram. But since every man in his turn has been wounded, no man is ashamed of a ..

310. *Ballad Metre.*

When Dr. Percy first published his collection of ancient English ballads, perhaps he was too lavish in

(1) The inventor of spectacles is said to have been a monk at Pisa, who lived at the end of the thirteenth century, and whose name was Spina.

commendation of the beautiful simplicity and poetic merit he supposed himself to discover in them. This circumstance provoked Johnson to observe one evening at Miss Reynolds's tea-table, that he could rhyme as well, and as elegantly, in common narrative and conversation. "For instance, says he," —

"As with my hat upon my head
I walk'd along the Strand,
I there did meet another man
With his hat in his hand. (1)

Or, to render such poetry subservient to my own immediate use, —

"I therefore pray thee, Renny dear,
That thou wilt give to me,
With cream and sugar soften'd well,
Another dish of tea.

"Nor fear that I, my gentle maid,
Shall long detain the cup,
When once unto the bottom I
Have drunk the liquor up.

"Yet hear, alas! this mournful truth,
Nor hear it with a frown; —
Thou canst not make the tea so fast
As I can gulp it down."

And thus he proceeded through several more stanzas, till the reverend critic cried out for quarter. Such ridicule, however, was unmerited.

311. *Night Composition.*

"Night," Mr. Tyers has told us, "was Johnson's time for composition." But this assertion, if meant for a general one, can be refuted by living evidence. Al-

(1) See *post*, where this anecdote is told in the vague manner and on the imperfect authority of Mr. Cradock. To have deliberately composed and circulated a parody on his friend's poem would have been a very different thing from a sportive *improvisation* over the tea-table. — C.

most the whole [illegible] Shakspeare, and no inconsiderable part of the "Lives of the Poets," were composed by daylight, and in a room where a friend (1) was employed by him in other investigations. His studies were only continued through the night, when the day had been preoccupied, or proved too short for his undertakings. Respecting the fertility of his genius, the resources of his learning, and the accuracy of his judgment, the darkness and the light were both alike.

312. *Bolingbroke and Mallet.*

When in his latter years he was reminded of his forcible sarcasm against Bolingbroke and Mallet (2), the Doctor exclaimed, "Did I really say so?" "Yes, Sir." He replied, "I am heartily glad of it."

313. *Capel.*

"You knew Mr. Capel (3), Dr. Johnson?" "Yes, Sir; I have seen him at Garrick's." "And what think you of his abilities?" "They are just sufficient, Sir, to enable him to select the black hairs from the white ones, for the use of the periwig makers. Were he and I to count the grains in a bushel of wheat for a wager, he would certainly prove the winner."

314. *Collins and Steevens.—Mrs. Johnson's Death.*

When one Collins, a sleep-compelling divine of Hertfordshire, with the assistance of counsellor Hardinge, published a heavy half-crown pamphlet against Mr. Steevens, Garrick asked the Doctor, what he thought of this attack on his coadjutor. "I regard Collins's performance," replied Johnson, "as a great gun without powder or shot." When the same Collins after-

(1) Mr. Steevens himself. — C.
(2) See *antè*, Vol. II. p. 15. — C.
(3) The annotator of Shakspeare. — C.

wards appeared as editor of Capel's posthumous notes on Shakspeare, with a preface of his own, containing the following words, — "A sudden and most severe stroke of affliction has left my mind too much distracted to be capable of engaging in such a task (that of a further attack on Mr. Steevens), though I am prompted to it by inclination as well as duty," — the Doctor asked to what misfortune the foregoing words referred. Being told that the critic had lost his wife, Johnson added, "I believe that the loss of teeth may deprave the voice of a singer, and that lameness will impede the motions of a dancing master, but I have not yet been taught to regard the death of a wife as the grave of literary exertions. When my dear Mrs. Johnson expired, I sought relief in my studies, and strove to lose the recollection of her in the toils of literature. Perhaps, however, I wrong the feelings of this poor fellow. His wife might have held the pen in his name. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ*. Nay, I think I observe, throughout his two pieces, a woman's irritability, with a woman's impotence of revenge." Yet such were Johnson's tender remembrances of his own wife, that after her death, though he had a whole house at command, he would study nowhere but in a garret. Being asked the reason why he chose a situation so incommodious, he answered, "Because in that room only I never saw Mrs. Johnson."

315. *Frequenting the Theatre.*

"Though you brought a tragedy, Sir, to Drury Lane, and at one time were so intimate with Garrick, you never appeared to have much theatrical acquaintance." "Sir, while I had, in common with other dramatic authors, the liberty of the scenes, without considering my admission behind them as a favour, I was frequently at the theatre. At that period all the wenches knew me, and dropped me a curtsy, as they passed on to the stage. But since poor Goldsmith's last comedy, I scarce recollect having seen the inside of a playhouse

To speak the truth, there is small encouragement there for a man whose sight and hearing are become so imperfect as mine. I may add, that, Garrick and Henderson excepted, I never met with a performer who had studied his art, or could give an intelligible reason for what he did." (1)

316. *Thrale's Table.*

"Mrs. Thrale," Mr. Tyers reports, "knew how to spread a table with the utmost plenty and elegance;" but all who are acquainted with this lady's domestic history must know, that, in the present instance, Mr. Tyers's praise of her is unluckily bestowed. Her husband superintended every dinner set before his guests. After his death, she confessed her total ignorance in culinary arrangements. Poor Thrale studied an art of which he loved the produce, and to which he expired a martyr. Johnson repeatedly, and with all the warmth of earnest friendship, assured him he was *nimis edax rerum*, and that such unlimited indulgence of his palate would precipitate his end.

317. *Late Hours.*

On the night before the publication of the first edition of his Shakspeare, he supped with some friends in the Temple, who kept him up, "nothing loth," till past five the next morning. Much pleasantry was passing on the subject of commentatorship, when, all on a sudden, the Doctor, looking at his watch, cried out, "This is sport to you, gentlemen; but you do not consider there are at most only four hours between me and criticism."

The Doctor is known to have been, like Savage, a very late visitor; yet, at whatever hour he returned, he

(1) This was probably before his acquaintance with Mr. Kemble and Mrs. Siddons, which took place only the year before his death. See *ante*, Vol. VIII. p. 236. — C.

never went to bed without a previous call on Mrs. Williams, the blind lady who for so many years had found protection under his roof. Coming home one morning between four and five, he said to her, "Take notice, Madam, that for once I am here before others are asleep. As I turned into the court, I ran against a knot of bricklayers." "You forget, my dear Sir," replied she, "that these people have all been a-bed, and are now preparing for their day's work." "Is it so, then, Madam? I confess that circumstance had escaped me."

318. "Time to go to Bed."

Once, and but once, he is known to have had too much wine; a circumstance which he himself discovered, on finding one of his sesquipedalian words hang fire. He then started up, and gravely observed, "I think it time we should go to bed."

319. Doctoring one's-self.

If "a little learning is a dangerous thing" on any speculative subject, it is eminently more so in the practical science of physic. Johnson was too frequently his own doctor. In October, 1784, just before he came to London, he had taken an unusual dose of squills, but without effect. He swallowed the same quantity on his arrival here, and it produced a most violent operation. He did not, as he afterwards confessed, reflect on the difference between the perished and inefficacious vegetable he found in the country, and the fresh and potent one of the same kind he was sure to meet with in town. "You find me at present," says he, "suffering from a prescription of my own. When I am recovered from its consequences, and not till then, I shall know the true state of my natural malady." From this period, he took no medicine without the approbation of Heberden. What follows is known by all, and by all

amented — are now, perhaps, even by the prebends of Westminster. (1)

320. *Johnson's Funeral.*

Johnson asked one of his executors, a few days before his death, "Where do you intend to bury me?" He answered, "In Westminster Abbey." "Then," continued he, "if my friends think it worth while to give me a stone, let it be placed over me so as to protect my body."

On the Monday after his decease he was interred in Westminster Abbey. The corpse was brought from his house, in Bolt Court, to the hearse, preceded by the Rev. Mr. Butt and the Rev. Mr. Strahan, about twelve o'clock. The following was the order of the procession: —

Hearse and six.

The executors, viz. Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir John Hawkins, and William Scott, LL. D. [Lord Stowell] in a coach and four.

Eight coaches and four, containing the Literary Club, and others of the Doctor's friends, invited by the executors; viz. Dr. Burney, Mr. Malone, Mr. Steevens, the Rev. Mr. Strahan, Mr. Ryland, Mr. Hoole, Dr. Brocklesby, Mr. Cruikshanks, Mr. Nichols, Mr. Low, Mr. Paradise, General Paoli, Count Zenobia, Dr. Butter, Mr. Holder, Mr. Seward, Mr. Metcalf, Mr. Sastres, Mr. Des Moulins, the Rev. Mr. Butt, Dr. Horsley, Dr. Farmer, Dr. Wright; to whom may be added, Mr. Cooke (who was introduced by Dr. Brocklesby), and the Doctor's faithful servant, Francis Barber.

Two coaches and four, containing the pall-bearers, viz. Mr. Burke, Mr. Windham, Sir Charles Bunbury, Sir Joseph Banks, Mr. Colman, and Mr. Langton.

(1) This sarcasm against the *prebendaries* of Westminster, and particularly against Johnson's friend Dr. Taylor, who was one of them, will be explained presently. — C.

After these followed two mourning coaches and four, filled with gentlemen who, as volunteers, honoured themselves by attending the funeral. These were the Rev. Mr. Hoole, the Rev. Mr. [illegible] Mr. Henderson, Mr. Mickle, Mr. Sharp, Mr. C. Burney, and Mr. G. Nicol.

Thirteen gentlemen's carriages closed the procession, which reached the Abbey a little before one.

The corpse was met at the west door by the prebendaries in residence, to the number of six, in their surplices and doctor's hoods; and the officers of the church, and attendants on the funeral, were then marshalled in the following order: —

Two vergers.
The Rev. Mr. Strahan.
The Rev. Mr. Butt.
THE BODY.
Sir Joshua Reynolds, as chief mourner and an executor.
Sir John Hawkins and Dr. Scott, as executors.
The rest two and two

The body then proceeded to the south cross, and, in view of the three executors, was deposited by the side of Mr. Garrick, with the feet opposite to the monument of Shakspeare.

The Rev. Dr. Taylor performed the burial service, attended by some gentlemen of the Abbey; but it must be regretted by all who continue to reverence the hierarchy, that the cathedral service was withheld from its invariable friend; and the omission was truly offensive to the audience at large.

How this omission happened, we are unable to account. Perhaps the executors should have asked for it; but at all events it should have been performed. That the fees for opening the ground were paid, was a matter of indispensable necessity; and there can be no doubt, from the liberality of the present dean and

chapter, but the[illegible] returned, as was offered in the case of Dryd[illegible] done in that of St. Evremond, who "di[illegible]tterbury, "renouncing the Christian relig[illegible] yet the church of Westminster thought fit, in honour [illegible] memory, to give his body room in the Abbey, [illegible] allow him to be buried there *gratis*, so far as the [illegible]pter were concerned, though he left 800*l*. sterling behind him, which is thought every way an unaccountable piece of management. How striking the contrast between St. Evremond and Johnson. (1)

(1) "It must be told, that a dissatisfaction was expressed in the public papers that he was not buried with all possible funeral rites and honours. In all processions and solemnities something will be forgotten or omitted. Here no disrespect was intended. The executors did not think themselves justified in doing more than they did; for only a little cathedral service, accompanied with lights and music, would have raised the price of interment. In this matter fees ran high; they could not be excused; and the expenses were to be paid from the property of the deceased. His funeral expenses amounted to more than two hundred pounds. Future monumental charges may be defrayed by the generosity of subscription." — *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1785, p. 911., *probably by Mr. Tyers.*

It is supposed that the fees were *not* returned, and it is to be added, that all Dr. Johnson's friends, but especially Mr. Malone and Mr. Steevens, were indignant at the mean and selfish spirit which the dean and chapter exhibited on this occasion; but they were especially so against Dr. Taylor, not only for not having prevailed on his colleagues to show more respect to his old friend, but for the unfeeling manner in which he himself performed the burial service. — C.

PART VI.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON,

BY MISS REYNOLDS. (1)

[From a MS. entitled "Recollections of Dr. Johnson," communicated in 1829, to Mr. Croker, by Mr. Palmer, grand-nephew of Sir Joshua Reynolds. See *antè*, Vol. I. p. x.]

321. "*Clarissa Harlowe.*"

THE first time I was in company with Dr. Johnson, which was at Miss Cotterel's (1), I well remember the flattering notice he took of a lady present, on her saying that she was inclined to estimate the morality of every person according as they liked or disliked "Clarissa Harlowe." He was a great admirer of Richardson's works in general, but of "Clarissa" he always spoke with the highest enthusiastic praise. He used to say, that it was the first book in the world for the knowledge it displays of the human heart.

322. *Richardson.*

Yet of the author I never heard him speak with any degree of cordiality, but rather as if impressed with some cause of resentment against him; and this has been imputed to something of jealousy, not to say envy,

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 291.; and Vol. II. p. 188.]

on account of Richardson's having engrossed the attentions and affectionate assiduities of several very ingenious literary ladies, whom he used to call his adopted daughters, and for whom Dr. Johnson had conceived a paternal affection (particularly for two of them, Miss Carter and Miss Mulso, now Mrs. Chapone), previous to their acquaintance with Richardson; and it was said, that he thought himself neglected by them on his account.

323. *Female Friendship.*

Dr. Johnson set a higher value upon female friendship than, perhaps, most men; which may reasonably be supposed was not a little enhanced by his acquaintance with those ladies, if it was not originally derived from them. To their society, doubtless, Richardson owed that delicacy of sentiment, that feminine excellence, as I may say, that so peculiarly distinguishes his writings from those of his own sex in general, how high soever they may soar above the other in the more dignified paths of literature, in scientific investigations, and abstruse inquiries.

324. *What is Love?*

Dr. Johnson used to repeat, with very apparent delight, some lines of a poem written by Miss Mulso:—

> "Say, Stella, what is love, whose cruel power
> Robs virtue of content, and youth of joy?
> What nymph or goddess, in what fatal hour,
> Produced to light the mischief-making boy
>
> "Some say, by Idleness and Pleasure bred,
> The smiling babe on beds of roses lay;
> There with soft honey'd dews by Fancy fed,
> His infant beauties open'd on the day." (1)

(1) Johnson paid the first of those stanzas the great and undeserved compliment of quoting it in his Dictionary, under the word "QUATRAIN."—C.

325. *An Inn.*

Dr. Johnson had an uncommonly retentive memory for every thing that appeared to him worthy of observation. Whatever he met with in reading, particularly poetry, I believe he seldom required a revisal to be able to repeat verbatim. If not literally so, his deviations were generally improvements. This was the case, in some respects, in Shenstone's poem of "The Inn," which I learned from hearing Dr. Johnson repeat it; and I was surprised, on seeing it lately among the author's works for the first time, to find it so different. One stanza he seems to have extemporised himself: —

> "And once again I shape my way
> Through rain, through shine, through thick aud thin,
> Secure to meet, at close of day,
> A kind reception at an inn." (1)

326. *Quick Reading.*

He always read amazingly quick, glancing his eye from the top to the bottom of the page in an instant. If he made any pause, it was a compliment to the work; and, after seesawing over it a few minutes, generally repeated the passage, especially if it was poetry.

327. *Pope's "Essay on Man."*

One day, on taking up Pope's "Essay on Man," a particular passage seemed more than ordinarily to engage his attention; so much so, indeed, that, contrary to his usual custom, after he had left the book and the seat in which he was sitting, he returned to revise it, turning over the pages with anxiety to find it, and then repeated —

> "Passions, though selfish, if their means be fair
> List under Reason, and deserve her care;

---

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. VI. p. 82.]

Those that, imp[illegible] court a nobler aim,
Exalt their kind, and take some virtue's name."

His task, probably, was the whole paragraph, but these lines only were audible.

328. *Favourite Verses.*

He seemed much to delight in reciting verses, particularly from Pope. Among the many I have had the pleasure of hearing him recite, the conclusion of the "Dunciad," and his "Epistle to Jervas," seemed to claim his highest admiration: —

"Led by some rule that guides, but not constrains,
And finish'd more through happiness than pains," ( )

he used to remark, was a union that constituted the ultimate degree of excellence in the fine arts.

Two lines from Pope's "Universal Prayer" I have heard him quote, in very serious conversation, as his theological creed: —

"And binding Nature fast in fate,
Left free the human will."

Some lines also he used to repeat in his best manner, written in memory of Bishop Boulter (2), which I believe are not much known: —

Some write their wrongs in marble: he, more just,
Stoop'd down serene and wrote them in the dust;
Trod under foot, the sport of every wind,
Swept from the earth, and blotted from his mind.
There, secret in the grave, he bade them lie,
And grieved they could not 'scape the Almighty's eye."

329. *Goldsmith.*

Of Goldsmith's "Traveller" he used to speak in terms of the highest commendation. A lady (3) I

(1) Epistle to Jervas. — REYNOLDS.
(2) By Dr. Madden. See *antè*, Vol. II. p. 74. — C.
(3) Miss Reynolds herself. — C.

remember, who had the pleasure of hearing Dr. Johnson read it from the beginning to the end on its first coming out, to testify her admiration of it, exclaimed, "I never more shall think Dr. Goldsmith ugly."

In having thought so, however, she was by no means singular; an instance of which I am rather inclined to mention, because it involves a remarkable one of Dr. Johnson's ready wit: for this lady, one evening being in a large party, was called upon after supper for her toast, and seeming embarrassed, she was desired to give the ugliest man she knew; and she immediately named Dr. Goldsmith, on which a lady (1) on the other side of the table rose up and reached across to shake hands with her, expressing some desire of being better acquainted with her, it being the first time they had met; on which Dr. Johnson said, "Thus the ancients, on the commencement of their friendships, used to sacrifice a beast betwixt them."

Sir Joshua, I have often thought, never gave a more striking proof of his excellence in portrait-painting, than in giving dignity to Dr Goldsmith's countenance, and yet preserving a strong likeness. But he drew after his mind, or rather his genius, if I may be allowed to make that distinction; assimilating the one with his conversation, the other with his works.

Dr. Goldsmith's cast of countenance, and indeed his whole figure from head to foot, impressed every one at first sight with an idea of his being a low mechanic; particularly, I believe, a journeyman tailor. A little concurring instance of this I well remember. One day at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, in company with some gentlemen and ladies, he was relating with great indignation an insult he had just received from some gentleman he had accidentally met (I think at a coffee-house). "The fellow," he said, "took me for a tailor!" on which all

(1) Mrs. Cholmondeley. — REYNOLDS.

the party either laughed, and or showed they suppressed a laugh.

Dr. Johnson seemed to have much more kindness for Goldsmith, than Goldsmith had for him. He always appeared to be overawed by Johnson, particularly when in company with people of any consequence, always as if impressed with some fear of disgrace; and, indeed, well he might. I have been witness to many mortifications he has suffered in Dr. Johnson's company: one day in particular, at Sir Joshua's table, a gentleman to whom he was talking his best stopped him, in the midst of his discourse, with "Hush! hush! Dr. Johnson is going to say something."

At another time, a gentleman who was sitting between Dr. Johnson and Dr. Goldsmith, and with whom he had been disputing, remarked to another, loud enough for Goldsmith to hear him, "That he had a fine time of it, between *Ursa major* and *Ursa minor!*" (1)

330. *Talking one's best.*

Mr. Baretti used to remark, with a smile, that Dr. Johnson always talked his best to the ladies. But, indeed, that was his general practice to all who would furnish him with a subject worthy of his discussion; for, what was very singular in him, he would rarely, if ever, begin any subject himself, but would sit silent (2) till something was particularly addressed to him, and if that happened to lead to any scientific or moral inquiry, his benevolence, I believe, more immediately incited

(1) This is a striking instance of the easy fabrication of what are called *anecdotes*, and of how little even the best authorities can be relied on in such matters. The real anecdote was of *Doctor Major* and *Doctor Minor* (see *antè*, Vol. IV. p. 98.), by no means so happy as the fabrication; and the title of *Ursa Major* was applied to Johnson by old Lord Auchinlech (*antè*, Vol. V. p. 132.). From these two facts the pleasant fallacy quoted by Miss Reynolds was no doubt compounded. — C.

(2) See *antè*, Vol. IV. p. 71. — C.

him to expatiate on it for the edification of the ignorant than for any other motive whatever.

381. *Punishment of Criminals. — Original Sin.*

One day, on a lady's telling him that she had read Parnell's "Hermit" with dissatisfaction, for she could not help thinking that thieves and murderers, who were such immediate ministers from Heaven of good to man, did not deserve such punishments as our laws inflict, Dr. Johnson spoke such an eloquent oration, so deeply philosophical, as indeed afforded a most striking instance of the truth of Baretti's observation, but of which, to my great regret, I can give no corroborating proof, my memory furnishing me with nothing more than barely the general tendency of his arguments, which was to prove, that though it might be said that wicked men, as well as the good, were ministers of God, because in the moral sphere the good we enjoy and the evil we suffer are administered to us by man, yet, as Infinite Goodness could not inspire or influence man to act wickedly, but, on the contrary, it was his divine property to produce good out of evil, and as man was endowed with free-will to act, or to refrain from acting wickedly, with knowledge of good and evil, with conscience to admonish and to direct him to choose the one and to reject the other, he was, therefore, as criminal in the sight of God and of man, and as deserving punishment for his evil deeds, as if no good had resulted from them.

And yet, though, to the best of my remembrance, this was the substance of Dr. Johnson's discourse in answer to the lady's observation, I am rather apprehensive that, in some respects, it may be thought inconsistent with his general assertations, that man was by nature much more inclined to evil than to good. But it would ill become me to expatiate on such a subject.

Yet, what can be said to reconcile his opinion of the natural tendency of the human heart to evil with his

own zealous virtuous pretensions? Nothing, perhaps, at least by me, but that this opinion, I believe, was founded upon religious principles relating to original sin; and I well remember that, when disputing with a person on this subject, who thought that nature, reason, and virtue were the constituent principles of humanity, he would say, "Nay, nay, if man is by nature prompted to act virtuously, all the divine precepts of the Gospel, all its denunciations, all the laws enacted by man to restrain man from evil, had been needless."

332. *Sympathy.*

It is certain that he would scarcely allow any one to feel much for the distresses of others; or whatever he thought they might feel, he was very apt to impute to causes that did no honour to human nature. Indeed, I thought him rather too fond of Rochefoucault maxims.

333. *Evil Propensions.*

The very strict watch he apparently kept over his mind seems to correspond with his thorough conviction of nature's evil propensions; but it might be as likely in consequence of his dread of those peculiar ones, whatever they were, which attended, or rather constituted, his mental malady, which, I have observed, might probably have incited him so often to pray; and I impute it to the same cause, that he so frequently, with great earnestness, desired his intimate acquaintance to pray for him, apparently on very slight occasions of corporeal disorder.

334. *Morbid Melancholy.*

An axiom of his was, that the pains and miseries incident to human life far outweighed its happiness and good. But much may be said in Dr. Johnson's justification, supposing this notion should not meet with

universal approbation, he having, it is probable, imbibed it in the early part of his life when under the pressure of adverse fortune, and in every period of it under the still heavier pressure and more adverse influence of Nature herself; for I have often heard him lament that he inherited from his father a morbid disposition both of body and of mind — an oppressive melancholy, which robbed him of the common enjoyments of life.(1)

Indeed, he seemed to struggle almost incessantly with some mental evil, and often, by the expression of his countenance and the motion of his lips, appeared to be offering up some ejaculation to Heaven to remove it. But in Lent or near the approach of any great festival, he would generally retire from the company to a corner of the room, but most commonly behind a window-curtain, to pray, and with such energy, and in so loud a whisper, that every word was heard distinctly, particularly the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed, with which he constantly concluded his devotions. Sometimes some words would emphatically escape him in his usual tone of voice.

Probably his studious attention to the secret workings of his peculiar mental infirmity, together with his experience of divine assistance co-operating with his reasoning faculties, to repel its force, may have proved in the highest degree conducive to the exaltation of his piety, and the pre-eminence of his wisdom. And I think it equally probable, that all his natural defects were conducive to that end; for being so peculiarly debarred from the enjoyment of those amusements which the eye and the ear afford, doubtless he sought more assiduously for those gratifications which scientific pursuits or philosophic meditation bestow.

(1) This last paragraph was originally written, "terrifying melancholy, which he was sometimes apprehensive bordered on insanity." This Miss Reynolds softened into the remark as it stands above. — C.

335. *Painting and Music.*

These defects sufficiently account for his insensibility of the charms of music and of painting, being utterly incapable of receiving any delight from the one or the other, particularly from painting, his sight being more deficient than his hearing.

Of the superficies of the fine arts, or visible objects of taste, he could have had but an imperfect idea; but as to the invisible principles of a natural good taste, doubtless he was possessed of these in the most eminent degree, and I should have thought it a strange inconsistency indeed in his character, had he really wanted a taste for music; but as a proof that he did not, I think I had need only mention, that he was remarkably fond of Dr. Burney's "History of Music (1)," and that he said it showed that the author understood the philosophy of music better than any man that ever wrote on that subject.

It is certain that, when in the company of connoisseurs, whose conversation has turned chiefly upon the merits of the attractive charms of painting, perhaps of pictures that were immediately under their inspection, Dr. Johnson, I have thought, used to appear as if conscious of his unbecoming situation, or rather, I might say, suspicious that it was an unbecoming situation.

But it was observable, that he rather avoided the discovery of it; for when asked his opinion of the likeness of any portrait of a friend, he has generally evaded the question, and if obliged to examine it, he has held the picture most ridiculously, quite close to his eye, just as he held his book. But he was so unwilling to expose that defect, that he was much displeased with Sir

(1) Miss Reynolds will hardly convince any one that Dr Johnson was fond of *music* by proving that he was fond of his friend Dr. Burney's "History of Music." The truth is, he held both painting and music in great contempt, because his organs afforded him no adequate perception of either. — C.

Joshua, I remember, for drawing him with his book held in that manner, which, I believe, was the cause of that picture being left unfinished." (1)

336. *Religion and Morality.—Good-breeding.*

On every occasion that had the least tendency to depreciate religion or morality, he totally disregarded all forms or rules of good-breeding, as utterly unworthy of the slightest consideration. But it must be confessed, that he sometimes suffered this noble principle to transgress its due bounds, and to extend even to those who were anywise connected with the person who had offended him.

337. *Republicans.*

His treatment of Mr. Israel Wilkes (2) was mild in comparison of what a gentleman (3) met with from him one day at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, a barrister at law and a man of fashion, who, on discoursing with Dr. (then Mr.) Johnson on the laws and government of different nations (I remember particularly those of Venice), and happening to speak of them in terms of high approbation: "Yes, Sir," says Johnson, "all republican rascals think as you do." How the conversation ended I have forgot, it was so many years ago; but that he made no apology to the gentleman I am very sure, nor to any person present, for such an outrage against society.

338. *Influence of Age.*

Of latter years he grew much more companionable, and I have heard him say, that he knew himself to be so. "In my younger days," he would say, "it is

(1) This, however, or a similar picture, was finished and engraved as the frontispiece of Murphy's edition of Dr. Johnson's works. — C.

(2) See *antè*, Vol. VI. p. 185.

(3) Mr. Elliot. — Reynolds.

true I was much inclined to treat mankind with asperity and contempt; but I found it answered no good end. I thougat it wiser and better to take the world as it goes. Besides, as I have advanced in life I have had more reason to be satisfied with it. Mankind have treated me with more kindness, and of course I have more kindness for them.

339. *Influence of Fortune.*

In the latter part of his life, indeed, his circumstances were very different from what they were in the beginning. Before he had the pension, he literally dressed like a beggar (1); and from what I have been told, he as literally lived as such; at least as to common conveniences in his apartments, wanting even a chair to sit on, particularly in his study, where a gentleman who frequently visited him whilst writing his Idlers constantly found him at his desk, sitting on one with three legs; and on rising from it, he remarked that Dr. Johnson never forgot its defect, but would either hold it in his hand or place it with great composure against some support, taking no notice of its imperfection to his visitor. Whether the visitor sat on a chair, or on a pile of folios (2), or how he sat, I never remember to have been told.

340. *Ceremony to Ladies.*

He particularly piqued himself upon his nice observance of ceremonious punctilios towards ladies. A remarkable instance of this was his never suffering any lady to walk from his house to her carriage, through Bolt Court, unattended by himself to hand her into it (at least I have reason to suppose it to be his general custom, from his constant performance of it to those

(1) See *post*, in Miss Hawkins's Anecdotes, how different his appearance was after the pension. — C.

(2) See *antè*, p. 172. — C.

with whom he was the most intimately acquainted); and if any obstacle prevented it from driving off, there he would stand by the door of it, and gather a mob around him; indeed, they would begin to gather the moment he appeared handing the lady down the steps into Fleet Street. But to describe his appearance — his important air — that indeed cannot be described; and his morning habiliments would excite the utmost astonishment in my reader, that a man in his senses could think of stepping outside his door in them, or even to be seen at home. Sometimes he exhibited himself at the distance of eight or ten doors from Bolt Court, to get at the carriage, to the no small diversion of the populace. (1)

341. *Johnson's Dress.—Miss Cotterel.*

His best dress was, in his early times, so very mean, that one afternoon as he was following some ladies up stairs, on a visit to a lady of fashion (Miss Cotterel (2), the servant, not knowing him, suddenly seized him by the shoulder, and exclaimed, "Where are you going?" striving at the same time to drag him back; but a gentleman (3) who was a few steps behind prevented her from doing or saying more, and Mr. Johnson growled all the way up stairs, as well he might. He seemed much chagrined and discomposed. Unluckily, whilst in this humour, a lady of high rank (4) happen-

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. VI. p. 25.—C.]

(2) His acquaintance with this lady and her sister, who married Dean Lewis, continued to the last days of his life. He says in one of his letters to Mrs. Thrale, "I know not whether I told you that my old friend *Mrs.* Cotterel, now no longer *Miss*, has called to see me. Mrs. Lewis is not well.—*April* 26. 1784." It is gratifying to observe how many of Johnson's earliest friends continued so to the last. — C.

(3) Sir Joshua (then Mr.) Reynolds. — C.

(4) Lady Fitzroy. — Miss Reynolds. — See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 293., where this story is told of the Duchess of Argyll and another lady of high rank: that other lady was no doubt the person erroneously designated by Miss Reynolds as *Lady Fitz-*

ing to call upon Miss Cotterel, he was most violently offended with her for not introducing him to her ladyship, and still more so for her seeming to show more attention to her than to him. After sitting some time silent, meditating how to *down* Miss Cotterel, he addressed himself to Mr. Reynolds, who sat next him, and, after a few introductory words, with a loud voice said, "I wonder which of us two could get most money at his trade in one week, were we to work hard at it from morning till night." I don't remember the answer; but I know that the lady, rising soon after, went away without knowing what trade they were of. She might probably suspect Mr. Johnson to be a poor author by his dress; and because the trade of neither a blacksmith, a porter, or a chairman, which she probably would have taken him for in the street, was not quite so suitable to the place she saw him in. This incident he used to mention with great glee — how he had *downed* Miss Cotterel, though at the same time he professed a great friendship and esteem for that lady.

342. *Dr. Barnard. — "Forty-five."*

It is certain, for such kind of mortifications, he never expressed any concern; but on other occasions he has shown an amiable sorrow (1) for the offence he has given, particularly if it seemed to involve the slightest disrespect to the church or to its ministers.

I shall never forget with what regret he spoke of the rude reply he made to Dr. Barnard, on his saying that men never improved after the age of forty-five.

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roy. She probably was Elizabeth Cosby, wife of Lord Augustus Fitzroy, and grandmother of the present Duke of Grafton. — C.

(1) "He repented just as certainly, however, if he had been led to praise any person or thing by accident more than he thought it deserved; and was on such occasions comically earnest to destroy the praise or pleasure he had unintentionally given." — *Piozzi.* — C.

"That is not true, Sir," said Johnson. "You, who perhaps are forty-eight, may still improve, if you will try: I wish you would set about it; and I am afraid," he added, "there is great room for it;" and this was said in rather a large party of ladies and gentlemen at dinner. Soon after the ladies withdrew from the table, Dr. Johnson followed them, and, sitting down by the lady of the house, he said, "I am very sorry for having spoken so rudely to the dean." "You very well may, Sir." "Yes," he said, "it was highly improper to speak in that style to a minister of the Gospel, and I am the more hurt on reflecting with what mild dignity he received it." When the dean came up into the drawing-room, Dr. Johnson immediately rose from his seat, and made him sit on the sofa by him, and with such a beseeching look for pardon, and with such fond gestures — literally smoothing down his arms and his knees — tokens of penitence, which were so graciously received by the dean as to make Dr. Johnson very happy, and not a little added to the esteem and respect he had previously entertained for his character.

The next morning the dean called on Sir Joshua Reynolds with the following verses: —

"I lately thought no man alive
Could e'er improve past forty-five,
And ventured to assert it.
The observation was not new,
But seem'd to me so just and true
That none could controvert it.

"'No, Sir,' says Johnson, ''tis not so;
'Tis your mistake, and I can show
An instance, if you doubt it.
You, who perhaps are forty-eight,
May still improve, 't is not too late:
I wish you 'd set about it.'

"Encouraged thus to mend my faults,
I turn'd his counsel in my thoughts
Which way I could apply it;

Genius I knew was past my reach,
For who can learn what none can teach?
And wit — I could not buy it.

"Then come, my friends, and try your skill;
You may improve me if you will,
(My books are at a distance),
With you I'll live and learn, and then
Instead of books I shall read men,
So lend me your assistance.

"Dear knight of Plympton (1), teach me how
To suffer with unclouded brow
And smile serene as thine,
The jest uncouth and truth severe;
Like thee to turn my deafest ear,
And calmly drink my wine.

"Thou say'st not only skill is gain'd,
But genius, too, may be attain'd,
By studious invitation;
Thy temper mild, thy genius fine,
I'll study till I make them mine
By constant meditation.

"Thy art of pleasing teach me, Garrick,
Thou who reverest odes Pindaric (2)
A second time read o'er;
Oh! could we read thee backwards too,
Last thirty years thou shouldst review,
And charm us thirty more.

"If I have thoughts and can't express 'em,
Gibbon shall teach me how to dress 'em
In terms select and terse;
Jones teach me modesty and Greek;
Smith, how to think; Burke, how to speak;
And Beauclerk to converse.

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(1) Sir Joshua Reynolds was born at Plympton in Devon. — C.

(2) A humorous attempt of Garrick's to read one of Cumberland's odes backwards. See *antè*, Vol. VI. p. 163. — C.

"Let Johnson teach me how to place
In fairest light each borrowed grace;
From him I'll learn to write;
Copy his free and easy style,
And from the roughness of his file
Grow, like himself, polite."

343. *Scepticism.*

Talking on the subject of scepticism, he said, "The eyes of the mind are like the eyes of the body; they can see only at such a distance: but because we cannot see beyond this point, is there nothing beyond it?"

344. *Want of Memory.*

Talking of the want of memory, he said, "No, Sir, it is not true; in general every person has an equal capacity for reminiscence, and for one thing as well as another, otherwise it would be like a person complaining that he could hold silver in his hand, but could not hold copper."

345. *Genius.*

"No, Sir," he once said, "people are not born with a particular genius for particular employments or studies, for it would be like saying that a man could see a great way east, but could not west. It is good sense applied with diligence to what was at first a mere accident, and which, by great application, grew to be called, by the generality of mankind, a particular genius."

346. *Imagination.*

Some person advanced, that a lively imagination disqualified the mind from fixing steadily upon objects which required serious and minute investigation. JOHNSON. "It is true, Sir, a vivacious quick imagination does sometimes give a confused idea of things, and which do not fix deep, though, at the same time, he has a capacity to fix them in his memory, if he would endeavour at it. It being like a man that, when he is

running, does not make observations on what he meets with, and consequently is not impressed by them; but he has, nevertheless, the power of stopping and informing himself."

347. *Conscience and Shame.*

A gentleman was mentioning it as a remark of an acquaintance of his, "that he never knew but one person that was completely wicked." JOHNSON. "Sir, I don't know what you mean by a person completely wicked." GENTLEMAN. "Why, any one that has entirely got rid of all shame." JOHNSON. "How is he, then, completely wicked? He must get rid, too, of all conscience." GENTLEMAN. "I think conscience and shame the same thing." JOHNSON. "I am surprised to hear you say so; they spring from two different sources, and are distinct perceptions: one respects this world, the other the next." A LADY. "I think, however, that a person who has got rid of shame is in a fair way to get rid of conscience." JOHNSON. "Yes, 'tis a part of the way, I grant; but there are degrees at which men stop, some for the fear of men, some for the fear of God: shame arises from the fear of men, conscience from the fear of God."

348. *Bennet Langton.*

Dr. Johnson seemed to delight in drawing characters; and when he did so *con amore*, delighted every one that heard him. Indeed, I cannot say I ever heard him draw any *con odio*, though he professed himself to be, or at least to love, a *good hater*. But I have remarked that his dislike of any one seldom prompted him to say much more than that the fellow is a *blockhead*, a *poor creature*, or some such epithet. I shall never forget the exalted character he drew of his friend Mr. Langton, nor with what energy, what fond delight, he expatiated in his praise, giving him every excellence that nature could bestow, and every perfection that

humanity could acquire. (1) A literary lady was present, Miss Hannah More, who perhaps inspired him with an unusual ardour to shine, which indeed he did with redoubled lustre, deserving himself the praises he bestowed: not but I have often heard him speak in terms equally high of Mr. Langton, though more concisely expressed.

349. *Mrs. Thrale.*

On the praises of Mrs. Thrale he used to dwell with a peculiar delight, a paternal fondness, expressive of conscious exultation in being so intimately acquainted with her. One day, in speaking of her to Mr. Harris, author of "Hermes," and expatiating on her various perfections, — the solidity of her virtues, the brilliancy of her wit, and the strength of her understanding, &c. — he quoted some lines (a stanza, I believe, but from what author I know not), with which he concluded his most eloquent eulogium, and of these I retained but the two last lines (2): —

> "Virtues — of such a generous kind,
> Good in the last recesses of the mind."

350. *Johnson's Benevolence.*

It will doubtless appear highly paradoxical to the generality of the world to say, that few men, in his ordinary disposition, or common frame of mind, could be more inoffensive than Dr. Johnson; yet surely those who knew his uniform benevolence, and its actuating principles — steady virtue, and true holiness — will readily agree with me, that peace and good-will towards man were the natural emanations of his heart.

I shall never forget the impression I felt in Dr. Johnson's favour, the first time I was in his company,

(1) See *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 279.—C.

(2) Being so particularly engaged as not to be able to attend to them sufficiently. — Miss Reynolds.

on his saying, that as he returned to his lodgings, at one or two o'clock in the morning, he often saw poor children asleep on thresholds and stalls, and that he used to put pennies into their hands to buy them a breakfast. (1)

351. *Sunday.*

He always carried a religious treatise in his pocket on a Sunday, and he used to encourage me to relate to him the particular parts of Scripture I did not understand, and to write them down as they occurred to me in reading the Bible.

352. *Johnson's Recitation.*

When repeating to me one day Grainger's "Ode on Solitude," I shall never forget the concordance of the sound of his voice with the grandeur of those images; nor, indeed, the gothic dignity of his aspect, his look and manner, when repeating sublime passages. But what was very remarkable, though his cadence in reading poetry was so judiciously emphatical as to give additional force to the words uttered, yet in reading prose, particularly on common or familiar subjects, narrations, essays, letters, &c., nothing could be more injudicious than his manner, beginning every period with a pompous accent, and reading it with a whine, or with a kind of spasmodic struggle for utterance; and this, not from any natural infirmity, but from a strange singularity, in reading on, in one breath, as if he had made a resolution not to respire till he had closed the sentence.

353. *Johnson's Gesticulations.*

I believe no one has described his extraordinary gestures or antics (2) with his hands and feet, particularly

(1) And this at a time when he himself was living on *pennies*. — C.

(2) Mr. Boswell frequently (Vol. I. p. 161.; Vol. IV. p. 9.) and Mr. Whyte (*antè*, Vol. II. p. 280.; Vol. V. p. 263.), have

when passing over the threshold of a door, or rather before he would venture to pass through any doorway. On entering Sir Joshua's house with poor Mrs. Williams, a blind lady who lived with him, he would quit her hand, or else whirl her about on the steps as he whirled and twisted about to perform his gesticulations; and as soon as he had finished, he would give a sudden spring, and make such an extensive stride over the threshold, as if he was trying for a wager how far he could stride, Mrs. Williams standing groping about outside the door, unless the servant took hold of her hand to conduct her in, leaving Dr. Johnson to perform at the parlour door much the same exercise over again.

But it was not only at the entrance of a door that he exhibited such strange manœuvres, but across a room or in the street with company, he has stopped on a sudden, as if he had recollected his task, and began to perform it there, gathering a mob round him; and when he had finished would hasten to his companion (who probably had walked on before) with an air of great satisfaction that he had done his duty.

One Sunday morning, as I was walking with him in Twickenham meadows, he began his antics both with his feet and hands, with the latter as if he was holding the reins of a horse like a jockey on full speed. But to describe the strange positions of his feet is a difficult task; sometimes he would make the back part of his heels to touch, sometimes his toes, as if he was aiming at making the form of a triangle, at least the two sides of one. Though indeed, whether these were his gestures on this particular occasion in Twickenham meadows I do not recollect, it is so long since; but I well remember that they were so extraordinary that men,

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described his gestures very strikingly, though not quite in so much detail as Miss Reynolds. Mr. Boswell's descriptions she must have seen. — C.

women, and children gathered round him, laughing. At last we sat down on some logs of wood by the river side, and they nearly dispersed; when he pulled out of his pocket Grotius "*De Veritate Religionis*," over which he seesawed at such a violent rate as to excite the curiosity of some people at a distance to come and see what was the matter with him.

We drank tea that afternoon at Sir John Hawkins's, and on our return I was surprised to hear Dr. Johnson's minute criticism on Lady Hawkins's dress, with every part of which almost he found fault. It was amazing, so short-sighted as he was, how very observant he was of appearances in dress and behaviour, nay, even of the deportment of servants while waiting at table. One day, as his man Frank was attending at Sir Joshua Reynolds's table, he observed, with some emotion, that he had placed the salver under his arm. Nor would the conduct of the company, blind as he was to his own many and strange peculiarities, escape his animadversion on some occasions. He thought the use of water-glasses a strange perversion of the idea of refinement, and had a great dislike to the use of a pocket-handkerchief at meals, when, if he happened to have occasion for one, he would rise from his chair and go to some distance, with his back to the company, and perform the operation as silently as possible.

354. *Carving. — Johnson at Table.*

Few people, I have heard him say, understood the art of carving better than himself; but that it would be highly indecorous in him to attempt it in company, being so near-sighted; that it required a suspension of his breath during the operation.

It must be owned, indeed, that it was to be regretted that he did not practise a little of that delicacy in eating, for he appeared to want breath more at that time than usual. It is certain that he did not appear to the best ad-

vantage at the hour of repast; but of this he was perfectly unconscious, owing probably to his being totally ignorant of the characteristic expressions of the human countenance, and therefore he could have no conception that his own expressed when most pleased any thing displeasing to others; for though, when particularly directing his attention towards any object to spy out defects or perfections, he generally succeeded better than most men; partly, perhaps, from a desire to excite admiration of his perspicacity, of which he was not a little ambitious — yet I have heard him say, and I have often perceived, that he could not distinguish any man's face half a yard distant from him, not even his most intimate acquaintance.

That Dr. Johnson possessed the essential principles of politeness and of good taste (which I suppose are the same, at least concomitant), none who knew his virtues and his genius will, I imagine, be disposed to dispute. But why they remained with him, like gold in the ore, unfashioned and unseen, except in his literary capacity, no person that I know of has made any inquiry, though in general it has been spoken of as an unaccountable inconsistency in his character. Much, too, may be said in excuse for an apparent asperity of manners which was, at times at least, the natural effect of those inherent mental infirmities to which he was subject. His corporeal defects also contributed largely to the singularity of his manners; and a little reflection on the disqualifying influence of blindness and deafness would suggest many apologies for Dr. Johnson's want of politeness.

The particular instance I have just mentioned, of his inability to discriminate the features of any one's face, deserves perhaps more than any other to be taken into consideration, wanting, as he did, the aid of those intelligent signs, or insinuations, which the countenance displays in social converse; and which, in their slightest

degree, influence and regulate the manners of the polite, or even the common observer. And to his defective hearing, perhaps, his unaccommodating manners may be equally ascribed, which not only precluded him from the perception of the expressive tones of the voice of others, but from hearing the boisterous sound of his own: and nothing, I believe, more conduced to fix upon his character the general stigma of ill-breeding, than his loud imperious tone of voice, which apparently heightened the slightest dissent to a tone of harsh reproof; and, with his corresponding aspect, had an intimidating influence on those who were not much acquainted with him, and excited a degree of resentment which his words in ordinary circumstances would not have provoked. I have often heard him on such occasions express great surprise, that what he had said could have given any offence.

Under such disadvantages, it was not much to be wondered at that Dr. Johnson should have committed many blunders and absurdities, and excited surprise and resentment in company; one in particular I remember. Being in company with Mr. Garrick and some others, who were unknown to Dr. Johnson, he was saying something tending to the disparagement of the character or of the works of a gentleman present — I have forgot which; on which Mr. Garrick touched his foot under the table; but he still went on, and Garrick, much alarmed, touched him a second time, and, I believe, the third; at last Johnson exclaimed, "David, David, is it you? What makes you tread on my toes so?" This little anecdote, perhaps, indicates as much the want of prudence in Dr. Johnson as the want of sight. But had he at first seen Garrick's expressive countenance, and (probably) the embarrassment of the rest of the company on the occasion, it doubtless would not have happened.

It were also much to be wished, in justice to Dr.

Johnson's character for good manners, that many *jocular* and *ironical* speeches which have been reported had been noted *as such*, for the information of those who were unacquainted with him.

Dr. Johnson was very ambitious of excelling in common acquirements, as well as the uncommon, and particularly in feats of activity. One day, as he was walking in Gunisbury Park (or Paddock) with some gentlemen and ladies, who were admiring the extraordinary size of some of the trees, one of the gentlemen remarked that, when he was a boy, he made nothing of climbing (*swarming*, I think, was the phrase) the largest there. "Why, I can swarm it now," replied Dr. Johnson, which excited a hearty laugh — (he was then between fifty and sixty); on which he ran to the tree, clung round the trunk, and ascended to the branches, and, I believe, would have gone in amongst them, had he not been very earnestly entreated to descend; and down he came with a triumphant air, seeming *to make nothing of it*.

At another time, at a gentleman's seat in Devonshire, as he and some company were sitting in a saloon, before which was a spacious lawn, it was remarked as a very proper place for running a race. A young lady present boasted that she could outrun any person; on which Dr. Johnson rose up and said, "Madam, you cannot outrun me;" and, going out on the lawn, they started. The lady at first had the advantage; but Dr. Johnson happening to have slippers on much too small for his feet, kicked them off up into the air, and ran a great length without them, leaving the lady far behind him, and, having won the victory, he returned, leading her by the hand, with looks of high exultation and delight.(1)

Though it cannot be said that he was "in manners

(1) This exhibition occurred during his visit to Devonshire in 1762, at the house of the lady to whom he made the avowal mentioned *antè*, Vol. II. p. 148. — C.

gentle," yet it justly [illegible] that he was "in affections mild," benevolent, and compassionate; and to this combination of character may, I believe, be ascribed, in a great measure, his extraordinary celebrity; his being beheld as a phenomenon or wonder of the age.

And yet Dr. Johnson's character, singular as it certainly was from the contrast of his mental endowments with the roughness of his manners, was, I believe, perfectly natural and consistent throughout; and to those who were intimately acquainted with him must, I imagine, have appeared so. For being totally devoid of all deceit, free from every tinge of affectation or ostentation, and unwarped by any vice, his singularities, those strong lights and shades that so peculiarly distinguish his character, may the more easily be traced to their primary and natural causes.

The luminous parts of his character, his soft affections, and I should suppose his strong intellectual powers, at least the dignified charm or radiancy of them, must be allowed to owe their origin to his strict, his rigid principles of religion and virtue; and the shadowy parts of his character, his rough, unaccommodating manners, were in general to be ascribed to those corporeal defects that I have already observed naturally tended to darken his perceptions of what may be called propriety and impropriety in general conversation; and of course in the ceremonious or artificial sphere of society gave his deportment so contrasting an aspect to the apparent softness and general uniformity of cultivated manners.

And perhaps the joint influence of these two primeval causes, his intellectual excellence and his corporeal defects, mutually contributed to give his manners a greater degree of harshness than they would have had if only under the influence of one of them; the imperfect perceptions of the one not unfrequently producing misconceptions in the other.

Besides these, many others equally natural causes concurred to constitute the singularity of Dr. Johnson's character. Doubtless, the progress of his education had a double tendency to brighten and to obscure it. But I must observe, that this obscurity (implying only his awkward uncouth appearance, his ignorance of the rules of politeness, &c.) would have gradually disappeared at a more advanced period, at least could have had no manner of influence to the prejudice of Dr. Johnson's character, had it not been associated with those corporeal defects above mentioned. But, unhappily, his untaught, uncivilised manner seemed to render every little indecorum or impropriety that he committed doubly indecorous and improper.

Part VII.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON,

BY MR. CUMBERLAND. (1)

355. *Johnson at the Tea-table.*

At the tea-table he had considerable demands upon his favourite beverage, and I remember when Sir Joshua Reynolds at my house reminded him that he had drunk eleven cups, he replied, "Sir, I did not count your glasses of wine, why should you number up my cups of tea?" And then laughing, in perfect good-humour he added, "Sir, I should have released the lady from any further trouble, if it had not been for your remark; but you have reminded me that I want one of the dozen, and I must request Mrs. Cumberland to round up my

(1) From Mr. Cumberland's Memoirs.

number." When he saw the readiness and complacency with which my wife obeyed his call, he turned a kind and cheerful look upon her, and said, "Madam, I must tell you for your comfort, you have escaped much better than a certain lady did awhile ago, upon whose patience I intruded greatly more than I have done on yours; but the lady asked me for no other purpose than to make a zany of me, and set me gabbling to a parcel of people I knew nothing of; so, Madam, I had my revenge of her; for I swallowed five-and-twenty cups of her tea, and did not treat her with as many words." I can only say my wife would have made tea for him as long as the New River could have supplied her with water.

It was on such occasions he was to be seen in his happiest moments, when, animated by the cheering attention of friends whom he liked, he would give full scope to those talents for narration in which I verily think he was unrivalled, both in the brilliancy of his wit, the flow of his humour, and the energy of his language. Anecdotes of times past, scenes of his own life, and characters of humorists, enthusiasts, crack-brained projectors, and a variety of strange beings that he had chanced upon, when detailed by him at length, and garnished with those episodical remarks, sometimes comic, sometimes grave, which he would throw in with infinite fertility of fancy, were a treat, which, though not always to be purchased by five-and-twenty cups of tea, I have often had the happiness to enjoy for less than half the number.

He was easily led into topics: it was not easy to turn him from them; but who would wish it? If a man wanted to show himself off by getting up and riding upon him, he was sure to run restive and kick him off; you might as safely have backed Bucephalus, before Alexander had lunged him. Neither did he always like to be over-fondled: when a certain gentleman out-

acted his part in this way, he is said to have demanded of him, "What provokes your risibility, Sir? Have I said any thing that you understand? Then I ask pardon of the rest of the company." But this is Henderson's anecdote of him, and I won't swear he did not make it himself. The following apology, however, I myself drew from him: when speaking of his Tour, I observed to him upon some passages, as rather too sharp upon a country and people who had entertained him so handsomely: "Do you think so, Cumbey?" he replied; "then I give you leave to say, and you may quote me for it, that there are more gentlemen in Scotland than there are shoes."

356. "*She Stoops to Conquer.*"

When Mr. Colman, then manager of Covent Garden theatre, protested against Goldsmith's last comedy, when as yet he had not struck upon a name for it, Johnson stood forth in all his terrors as champion for the piece and backed by us, his clients and retainers, demanded a fair trial. Colman again protested; but, with that salvo for his own reputation, liberally lent his stage to one of the most eccentric productions that ever found its way to it, and "She Stoops to Conquer" was put into rehearsal.

We were not over-sanguine of success, but perfectly determined to struggle hard for our author. We accordingly assembled our strength at the Shakspeare Tavern in a considerable body for an early dinner, where Samuel Johnson took the chair at the head of a long table, and was the life and soul of the corps: the poet took post silently by his side, with the Burkes, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Fitzherbert [1], Caleb Whitefoord, and a phalanx of North-British predetermined ap-

(1) A mistake. "She Stoops to Conquer" was played on Monday, the 15th March, 1773. Mr. Fitzherbert died early in 1772. — C.

plauders under the banner of Major Mills, all good men and true. Our illustrious friend was in inimitable glee, and poor Goldsmith that day took all his raillery as patiently and complacently as my friend Boswell would have done any day, or every day of his life. In the mean time, we did not forget our duty; and though we had a better comedy going on, in which Johnson was chief actor, we betook ourselves in good time to our separate and allotted posts, and waited the awful drawing up of the curtain. As our stations were preconcerted, so were our signals for plaudits arranged and determined upon, in a manner that gave every one his cue where to look for them, and how to follow them up.

We had amongst us a very worthy and efficient member, long since lost to his friends and the world at large, Adam Drummond, of amiable memory, who was gifted by nature with the most sonorous, and at the same time the most contagious laugh, that ever echoed from the human lungs. The neighing of the horse of the son of Hystaspes was a whisper to it; the whole thunder of the theatre could not drown it. This kind and ingenuous friend fairly forewarned us, that he knew no more when to give his fire than the cannon did that was planted on a battery. He desired therefore to have a flapper at his elbow, and I had the honour to be deputed to that office. I planted him in an upper box, pretty nearly over the stage, in full view of the pit and galleries, and perfectly well situated to give the echo all its play through the hollows and recesses of the theatre. The success of our manœuvres was complete. All eyes were upon Johnson, who sat in the front row of a side box, and when he laughed, every body thought themselves warranted to roar. In the mean time, my friend Drummond followed signals with a rattle so irresistibly comic, that, when he had repeated it several times, the attention of the spectators was so engrossed by his person and performances, that the progress of

the play seemed likely to become a secondary object, and I found it prudent to insinuate to him that he might halt his music without any prejudice to the author: but, alas! it was now too late to rein him in; he had laughed upon my signal where he found no joke, and now unluckily he fancied that he found a joke in almost every thing that was said; so that nothing in nature could be more mal-à-propos than some of his bursts every now and then were. These were dangerous moments, for the pit began to take umbrage; but we carried our play through, and triumphed not only over Colman's judgment, but our own.

357. *Garrick and Johnson*

Garrick was followed to the Abbey by a long-extended train of friends, illustrious for their rank and genius. I saw old Samuel Johnson standing beside his grave, at the foot of Shakspeare's monument, and bathed in tears. A few succeeding years laid him in earth; and though the marble shall preserve for ages the exact resemblance of his form and features, his own strong pen has pictured out a transcript of his mind, that shall outlive that and the very language which he laboured to perpetuate. Johnson's best days were dark; and only when his life was far in the decline, he enjoyed a gleam of fortune long withheld. Compare him with his countryman and contemporary last mentioned, and it will be one instance among many, that the man who only brings the muse's bantlings into the world has a better lot in it than he who has the credit of begetting them.

Shortly after Garrick's death, Dr. Johnson was told in a large company, "You are recent from your 'Lives of the Poets:' why not add your friend Garrick to the number?" Johnson's answer was, "I do not like to be officious; but if Mrs. Garrick will desire me to do it, I shall be very willing to pay that last tribute to the

memory of the man I loved." This sentiment was conveyed to Mrs. Garrick, but no answer was ever received.

358. *Character of Johnson.*

Alas! I am not fit to paint his character; nor is there need of it; *etiam mortuus loquitur;* every man, who can buy a book, has bought a Boswell. Johnson is known to all the reading world. I also knew him well, respected him highly, loved him sincerely: it was never my chance to see him in those moments of moroseness and ill-humour which are imputed to him, perhaps with truth; for who would slander him? But I am not warranted by any experience of those humours to speak of him otherwise than of a friend, who always met me with kindness, and from whom I never separated without regret. When I sought his company he had no capricious excuses for withholding it, but lent himself to every invitation with cordiality, and brought good-humour with him, that gave life to the circle he was in.

He presented himself always in his fashion of apparel: a brown coat with metal buttons, black waistcoat and worsted stockings, with a flowing bob wig, was the style of his wardrobe; but they were in perfectly good trim, and with the ladies, whom he generally met, he had nothing of the slovenly philosopher about him. He fed heartily, but not voraciously, and was extremely courteous in his commendations of any dish that pleased his palate: he suffered his next neighbour to squeeze the China oranges into his wine glass after dinner; which else perchance had gone aside and trickled into his shoes, for the good man had neither straight sight nor steady nerves.

Who will say that Johnson would have been such a champion in literature — such a front-rank soldier in the fields of fame — if he had not been pressed into the service, and driven on to glory with the bayonet of

sharp necessity pointed at his back?' If fortune had turned him into a field of clover, he would have lain down and rolled in it. The mere manual labour of writing would not have allowed his lassitude and love of ease to have taken the pen out of the inkhorn, unless the cravings of hunger had reminded him, that he must fill the sheet before he saw the table-cloth. He might, indeed, have knocked down Osborne for a blockhead, but he would not have knocked him down with a folio of his own writing. He would, perhaps, have been the dictator of a club, and wherever he sat down to conversation, there must have been that splash of strong bold thought about him, that we might still have had a *collectanea* after his death; but of prose I guess not much, of works of labour none, of fancy perhaps something more, especially of poetry, which, under favour, I conceive was not his tower of strength. I think we should have had his "Rasselas" at all events; for he was likely enough to have written at Voltaire, and brought the question to the test, if infidelity is any aid to wit. An orator he must have been; not improbably a parliamentarian, and, if such, certainly an oppositionist, for he preferred to talk against the tide. He would indubitably have been no member of the Whig Club, no partisan of Wilkes, no friend of Hume, no believer in Macpherson: he would have put up prayers for early rising, and lain in bed all day, and with the most active resolutions possible been the most indolent mortal living. He was a good man by nature, a great man by genius; we are now to inquire what he was by compulsion.

Johnson's first style was naturally energetic, his middle style was turgid to a fault, his latter style was softened down and harmonised into periods, more tuneful and more intelligible. His execution was rapid, yet his mind was not easily provoked into exertion: the variety we find in his writings was not the variety of

choice arising from the impulse of his proper genius, but tasks imposed upon him by the dealers in ink, and contracts on his part submitted to, in satisfaction of the pressing calls of hungry want; for, painful as it is to relate, I have heard that illustrious scholar assert (and he never varied from the truth of fact), that he subsisted himself for a considerable space of time upon the scanty pittance of four-pence halfpenny per day.

The expanse of matter which Johnson had found room for in his intellectual storehouse, the correctness with which he had asserted it, and the readiness with which he could turn to any article that he wanted to make present use of, were the properties in him which I contemplated with the most admiration. Some have called him a savage; they were only so far right in the resemblance, as that, like the savage, he never came into suspicious company without his spear in his hand and his bow and quiver at his back. In conclusion, Johnson's era was not wanting in men to be distinguished for their talents; yet if one was to be selected out as the first great literary character of the time, I believe all voices would concur in naming him. Let me here insert the following lines, descriptive of his character: —

ON SAMUEL JOHNSON.

Herculean strength and a Stentorian voice,
Of wit a fund, of words a countless choice:
In learning rather various than profound,
In truth intrepid, in religion sound:
A trembling form and a distorted sight,
But firm in judgment and in genius bright;
In controversy seldom known to spare,
But humble as the publican in prayer;
To more than merited his kindness, kind,
And, though in manners harsh, of friendly mind;
Deep tinged with melancholy's blackest shade,
And, though prepared to die, of death afraid —
Such JOHNSON was; of him with justice vain,
When will this nation see his like again?

PART VIII.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON,

BY MR. CRADOCK. (1)

359. "Œdipus."

THE first time I dined in company with Dr. Johnson was at T. Davies's, Russell Street, Covent Garden, as mentioned by Mr. Boswell, in his "Life of Johnson." (2) On mentioning my engagement previously to a friend, he said, "Do you wish to be well with Johnson?" "To be sure, Sir," I replied, "or I should not have taken any pains to have been introduced into his company." "Why then, Sir," says he, "let me offer you some advice: you must not leave him soon after dinner to go to the play; during dinner he will be rather silent — it is a very serious business with him; between six and seven he will look about him, and see who remains, and, if he then at all likes the party, he will be very civil and communicative." He exactly fulfilled what my friend had prophesied. Mrs. Davies did the honours of the table: she was a favourite with Johnson, who sat betwixt her and Dr. Harwood;" I sat next, below, to Mr. Boswell opposite. Nobody could bring Johnson forward more civilly or properly than Davies. The subject of conversation turned upon

(1) From Mr. Cradock's Memoirs. These anecdotes are certainly very loose and inaccurate; but, as they have been republished in the Gentleman's Magazine for January, 1828, "with some corrections and additions from the author's MS.," I think it right to notice them; and, as they profess to be there enlarged from the MS., I copy this latter version, which differs, in some points, from the Memoirs. — C.

(2) [See antè, Vol. VI. p. 157.]

the tragedy of "Œdipus." (1) This was particularly interesting to me, as I was then employed in endeavouring to make such alterations in Dryden's play, as to make it suitable to a revival at Drury Lane theatre. Johnson did not seem to think favourably of it; but I ventured to plead, that Sophocles wrote it expressly for the theatre, at the public cost, and that it was one of the most celebrated dramas of all antiquity. Johnson said, "Œdipus was a poor miserable man, subjected to the greatest distress, without any degree of culpability of his own." I urged, that Aristotle, as well as most of the Greek poets, were partial to this character; that Addison considered that, as terror and pity were particularly excited, he was the properest —— here Johnson suddenly becoming loud, I paused, and rather apologised that it might not become me, perhaps, too strongly to contradict Dr. Johnson. "Nay, Sir," replied he, hastily, "if I had not wished to have heard your arguments, I should not have disputed with you at all." All went on quite pleasantly afterwards. We sat late, and something being mentioned about my going to Bath, when taking leave, Johnson very graciously said, "I should have a pleasure in meeting you there." Either Boswell or Davies immediately whispered to me, "You 're landed."

360. *Garrick. — Burke. — Goldsmith.*

The next time I had the pleasure of meeting him was at the Literary Club (2) dinner at the coffee-house in

(1) Boswell says it turned on Aristotle's opinion of the Greek tragedy in general; which may, however, have led to the subject of Œdipus, though he does not notice it. — C.

(2) Here seems to be a mistake. No stranger is ever invited to *the Club.* It is probable that Mr. Cradock mistook an occasional meeting at the St. James's coffee-house (such a one did really produce "*Retaliation*") for a meeting of *the Club.* Mr. Colman, in his "Random Records," makes the same mistake, and wonders at finding noticed in "*Retaliation*" persons who did not belong to the Club. — C.

St. James's Street, to which I was introduced by my partial friend, Dr. Percy. Johnson that day was not in very good humour. We rather waited for dinner. Garrick came late, and apologised that he had been to the House of Lords, and Lord Camden insisted on conveying him in his carriage: Johnson said nothing, but he looked a volume. The party was numerous. I sat next Mr. Burke at dinner. There was a beef-steak pie placed just before us; and I remarked to Mr. Burke that something smelt very disagreeable, and looked to see if there was not a dog under the table. Burke, with great good humour, said, "I believe, Sir, I can tell you what is the cause; it is some of *my country butter* in the crust that smells so disagreeably." Dr. Johnson just at that time, sitting opposite, desired one of us to send him some of the beef-steak pie. We sent but little, which he soon despatched, and then returned his plate for more. Johnson particularly disliked that any notice should be taken of what he eat, but Burke ventured to say he was glad to find that Dr. Johnson was anywise able to relish the beef-steak pie. Johnson, not perceiving what he alluded to, hastily exclaimed, "Sir, there is a time of life when a man requires the repairs of the table!" The company rather talked for victory than social intercourse. I think it was in consequence of what passed that evening, that Dr. Goldsmith wrote his "Retaliation." Mr. Richard Burke (1) was present, talked most, and seemed to be the most free and easy of any of the company. I had never met him before. Burke seemed desirous of bringing his relative forward. In Mr. Chalmers's account of Goldsmith, different sorts of liquor are offered as appropriate to each guest. To the two Burkes ale from Wicklow, and wine from Ferney to me: my name is in italics, as supposing I am a wine-bibber; but the author's allu-

(1) Mr. Richard Burke, collector, of Grenada, the brother, not the son, of Mr. Burke.—C.

sion to the wines of Ferney was meant for me, I rather think, from my having taken a plan of a tragedy from Voltaire.

361. *Mrs. Percy.— Easton Mauduit.*

Mrs. Percy, afterwards nurse to the Duke of Kent, at Buckingham House, told me that Johnson once stayed near a month with them at their dull Parsonage at Easton Mauduit (1); that Dr. Percy looked out all sorts of books to be ready for his amusement after breakfast, and that Johnson was so attentive and polite to her, that, when Dr. Percy mentioned the literature proposed in the study, he said, "No, Sir, I shall first wait upon Mrs. Percy to feed the ducks." But those halcyon days were about to change, — not as to Mrs. Percy, for to the last she remained a favourite with him.

362. *Dr. Percy's Charity Sermon. — "The Idler."*

I happened to be in London once when Dr. Percy returned from Northumberland, and found that he was expected to preach a charity sermon almost immediately. This had escaped his memory, and he said, that "though much fatigued, he had been obliged to sit up very late to furnish out something from former discourses; but, suddenly recollecting that Johnson's fourth "Idler" (2) was exactly to his purpose, he had freely engrafted the greatest part of it." He preached, and his discourse was much admired; but being requested to print it, he most strenuously opposed the honour intended him, till he was assured by the governors, that it was absolutely necessary, as the annual contributions greatly depended on the account that was given in the appendix. In this dilemma, he earnestly requested that

(1) [In the summer of 1764, Johnson paid a visit to Dr. Percy at his vicarage in Easton Mauduit, and spent parts of the months of June, July and August with him.]

(2) [On Charities and Hospitals.]

I would call upon Dr. Johnson, and state particulars. I assented, and endeavoured to introduce the subject with all due solemnity; but Johnson was highly diverted with his recital, and, laughing, said, "Pray, Sir, give my kind respects to Dr. Percy, and tell him, I desire he will do whatever he pleases in regard to my 'Idler;' it is entirely at his service."

363. *Gibbon.*

But these days of friendly communication were, from various causes, speedily to pass away, and worse than indifference to succeed; for, one morning Dr. Percy said to Mr. Cradock, "I have not seen Dr. Johnson for a long time. I believe I must just call upon him, and greatly wish that you would accompany me. I intend," said he, "to tease him a little about Gibbon's pamphlet." "I hope not, Dr. Percy," was my reply. "Indeed I shall; for I have a great pleasure in combating his narrow prejudices." We went together; and Dr. Percy opened with some anecdotes from Northumberland House; mentioned some rare books that were in the library; and then threw out that the town rang with applause of Gibbon's "Reply to Davis;" that the latter "had written before he had read," and that the two "confederate doctors," as Mr. Gibbon termed them, "had fallen into some strange errors." Johnson said, he knew nothing of Davis's pamphlet, nor would he give him any answer as to Gibbon; but, if the "confederate doctors," as they were termed, had really made such mistakes as he alluded to, they were blockheads. Dr. Percy talked on in the most careless style possible, but in a very lofty tone; and Johnson appeared to be excessively angry. I only wished to get released: for, if Dr. Percy had proceeded to inform him, that he had lately introduced Mr. Hume to dine at the King's chaplain's table, there must have been an explosion.

364. "The Hermit of Warkworth."

With all my partiality for Johnson, I freely declare, that I think Dr. Percy received very great cause to take real offence at one, who, by a ludicrous parody on a stanza in the "Hermit of Warkworth," had rendered him contemptible. It was urged, that Johnson only meant to attack the metre; but he certainly turned the whole poem into ridicule:—

> "I put my hat upon my head,
> And walk'd into the Strand,
> And there I met another man
> With his hat in his hand."

Mr Garrick, in a letter to me, soon afterwards asked me, "Whether I had seen Johnson's criticism on the 'Hermit?' it is already," said he, "over half the town." Almost the last time that I ever saw Johnson, he said to me, "Notwithstanding all the pains that Dr. Farmer and I took to serve Dr. Percy, in regard to his 'Ancient Ballads,' he has left town for Ireland (1), without taking leave of either of us."

365. Roxana and Statira.

Mr. Nichols, in his entertaining "Literary Anecdotes," has justly remarked, that Johnson was not always that surly companion he was supposed to be, and gives as an instance rather an impertinent joke of mine about Alexander and his two queens, and Johnson's good-humoured reply, that "in *his* family it had never been ascertained which was Roxana and which was Statira (2);" but I then had got experience, and pretty well knew when I might safely venture into the lion's mouth.

(1) See *antè*, p. 194. Dr. Percy was made Bishop of Dromore in 1782. — C.

(2) Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Desmoulins. — C.

366. "Baiting the Bear."

Admiral Walsingham, who sometimes resided at Windsor, and sometimes in Portugal Street, frequently boasted that he was the only man to bring together miscellaneous parties, and make them all agreeable; and, indeed, there never before was so strange an assortment as I have occasionally met there. At one of his dinners, were the Duke of Cumberland (1), Dr. Johnson, Mr. Nairn, the optician, and Mr. Leoni, the singer: at another, Dr. Johnson, &c., and a young dashing officer. who determined, he whispered, to attack the old bear that we seemed all to stand in awe of. There was a good dinner, and during that important time Johnson was deaf to all impertinence. However, after the wine had passed rather freely, the young gentleman was resolved to bait him, and venture out a little further. "Now, Dr. Johnson, do not look so glum, but be a little gay and lively, like others: what would you give, old gentleman, to be as young and sprightly as I am?" "Why, Sir," said he, "I think I would almost be content to be as foolish."

367. Society. — Late Hours. — Clubs.

Johnson, it is well known, professed to recruit his acquaintance with younger persons, and, in his latter days, I, with a few others, were more frequently honoured by his notice. At times he was very gloomy, and would exclaim, "Stay with me, for it is a comfort to me"—a comfort that any feeling mind would wish to administer to a man so kind, though at times so boisterous, when he seized your hand, and repeated, "Ay, Sir, but to die and go we know not where," &c.

(1) It is possible Dr. Johnson may have been acquainted with the Hon. Robert Boyle, who took the name of Walsingham; but it is hardly possible that Dr. Johnson should have met the Duke of Cumberland at dinner without Mr. Boswell's having mentioned it. — C.

— here his morbid melancholy prevailed, and Garrick never spoke so impressively to the heart. Yet, to see him in the evening (though he took nothing stronger than lemonade), a stranger would have concluded that our morning account was a fabrication. No hour was too late to keep him from the tyranny of his own gloomy thoughts. A gentleman venturing to say to Johnson, "Sir, I wonder sometimes that you condescend so far as to attend a city club." "Sir, the great chair of a full and pleasant club is, perhaps, the throne of human felicity."

368. *Lives of the Poets.*

I had not the honour to be at all intimate with Johnson till about the time he began to publish his Lives of the Poets; and how he got through that arduous labour is, in some measure, still a mystery to me: he must have been greatly assisted by booksellers. (1) I had some time before lent him "Euripides" with Milton's manuscript notes: this, though he did not minutely examine (see Joddrel's "Euripides"), yet he very handsomely returned it, and mentioned it in his Life of Milton. (2) In the course of conversation one day I dropped out to him, that Lord Harborough (3) (then the Rev.) was in possession of a very valuable collection of manuscript poems, and that amongst them there were two or three in the handwriting of King James I.; that they were bound up handsomely in folio, and were entitled "Sackville's Poems." These he solicited me to borrow for him, and Lord Harborough very kindly intrusted them to me for his perusal.

(1) The original MS. is still extant, and it appears that he had very little assistance, and none at all from the booksellers. — C.

(2) "His 'Euripides' is, by Mr. Cradock's kindness, now in my hands: the margin is sometimes noted, but I have found nothing remarkable." — *Life of Milton*. — C.

(3) The Rev. Robert Sherrard, who became on the death of his elder brother, in 1770, fourth Earl of Harborough. — C.

369. *Harris's Hermes.—Tristram Shandy.*

Harris's Hermes was mentioned. I said, "I think the book is too abstruse; it is heavy." "It is; but a work of that kind must be heavy." "A rather dull man of my acquaintance asked me," said I, "to lend him some book to entertain him, and I offered him Harris's Hermes, and as I expected, from the title, he took it for a novel; when he returned it, I asked him how he liked it, and, what he thought of it? 'Why, to speak the truth,' says he, 'I was not much diverted; I think all these imitations of Tristram Shandy fall far short of the original!'" This had its effect, and almost produced from Johnson a rhinocerous laugh.

370. *A rude Speech.*

One of Dr. Johnson's rudest speeches was to a pompous gentleman coming out of Lichfield cathedral, who said, "Dr. Johnson, we have had a most excellent discourse to-day!" "That may be," said Johnson; "but, it is impossible that you should know it."

Of his kindness to me during the last years of his most valuable life, I could enumerate many instances. One slight circumstance, if any were wanting, would give an excellent proof of the goodness of his heart, and that to a person whom he found in distress. In such a case he was the very last man that would have given even the least momentary uneasiness to any one, had he been aware of it. The last time I saw him was just before I went to France. He said, with a deep sigh, "I wish I was going with you." He had just then been disappointed of going to Italy. Of all men I ever knew Dr. Johnson was the most instructive.

PART IX.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON,

BY MR. WICKINS (1)

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371. *Deception.*

WALKING one day with him in my garden at Lichfield, we entered a small meandering shrubbery, whose "vista not lengthened to the sight," gave promise of a larger extent. I observed, that he might perhaps conceive that he was entering an extensive labyrinth, but that it would prove a deception, though I hoped not an unpardonable one. "Sir," said he, "don't tell me of deception; a lie, Sir, is a lie, whether it be a lie to the eye or a lie to the ear."

372. *Urns.*

Passing on we came to an urn which I had erected to the memory of a deceased friend. I asked him how he liked that urn — it was of the true Tuscan order. "Sir," said he, "I hate urns (2); they *are* nothing, they *mean* nothing, convey no ideas but ideas of horror — would they were beaten to pieces to pave our streets!"

373. *Cold Baths.*

We then came to a cold bath. I expatiated upon its salubrity. "Sir," said he, "how do you do?"

(1) Dr. Harwood informs me that Mr. Wickins was a respectable draper in Lichfield. It is very true that Dr. Johnson was accustomed to call on him during his visits to his native town. The garden attached to his house was ornamented in the manner he describes, and no doubt was ever entertained of the exactness of his anecdotes.— C.

(2) See a similar sentiment on the occasion of Mr. Myddleton's urn to himself, *antè*, Vol. IV. p. 2. — C.

"Very well, I thank you, Doctor." "Then, Sir, let well enough alone, and be content. I hate immersion." Truly, as Falstaff says, the Doctor "would have a sort of alacrity at sinking." (1)

374. *The Venus de' Medicis.*

Upon the margin stood the Venus de' Medicis —

"So stands the statue that enchants the world."

"Throw her," said he, "into the pond to hide her nakedness, and to cool her lasciviousness."

375. *Arcadia.*

He then, with some difficulty, squeezed himself into a root-house, when his eye caught the following lines from Parnell: —

"Go search among your idle dreams,
Your busy, or your vain extremes,
And find a life of equal bliss,
Or own the next began in this."

The Doctor, however, not possessing any *silvan* ideas, seemed not to admit that heaven could be an Arcadia.

376. *Doing Good.*

I then observed him with Herculean strength tugging at a nail which he was endeavouring to extract from the bark of a plum tree; and having accomplished it, he exclaimed, "There, Sir, I have done *some* good to-day; the tree might have festered. I make a rule, Sir, to do some good every day of my life."

377. *Sterne's Sermons.*

Returning through the house, he stepped into a small study or book-room. The first book he laid his hands

(1) A mistake — he was a good swimmer. See *antè*, Vol. VI p. 218. — C.

upon was Harwood's (1) "Liberal Translation of the New Testament." The passage which first caught his eye was from that sublime apostrophe in St. John, upon the raising of Lazarus, "Jesus wept;" which Harwood had conceitedly rendered "and Jesus, the Saviour of the world, burst into a flood of tears." He contemptuously threw the book aside, exclaiming, "Puppy!" I then showed him Sterne's Sermons. "Sir," said he, "do you ever read any others?" "Yes, Doctor; I read Sherlock, Tillotson, Beveridge, and others." "Ay, Sir, *there* you drink the cup of salvation to the bottom; here you have merely the froth from the surface."

378. *Shakespeare's Mulberry Vase.* — *Garrick.*

Within this room stood the Shakspearean mulberry vase, a pedestal given by me to Mr. Garrick, and which was recently sold, with Mr. Garrick's gems, at Mrs. Garrick's sale at Hampton. The Doctor read the inscription: —

"Sacred to Shakspeare,
And in honour of
David Garrick, Esq.
The Ornament — the Reformer
Of the British Stage." (2)

"Ay, Sir; Davy, Davy loves flattery; but here, indeed, you have flattered him as he deserves, paying a just tribute to his merit."

(1) The reader must bear in mind that this Doctor Edward Harwood, the same mentioned by Mr. Cradock, and who has been dead many years, is not to be confounded with Dr. Thomas Harwood, of Lichfield, who is now alive, and whose information is quoted at the beginning of this article. — C.

(2) [This vase is now in the rich collection of Thomas Hill, Esq., of the Adelphi. See Frazer's Mag. v. x. p. 172., and New Monthly Mag., v. xliv. p. 154., *art.* "Life of Gilbert Gurney."]

Part X.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON, BY MR. GREEN, OF LICHFIELD.(1)

[illegible] *Dr. Kippis. — Royal Society.*

Dr. Brocklesby, a few days before the death of Dr. Johnson, found on the table Dr. Kippis's account of the Disputes of the Royal Society. Dr. Johnson inquired of his physician if he had read it, who answered in the negative. "You have sustained no loss, Sir. It is poor stuff, indeed, a sad unscholar-like performance. I could not have believed that that man would have written so ill."

380. *Dr. Warren.*

Being desired to call in Dr. Warren, he said, they might call in any body they pleased; and Warren was called. At his going away, "You have come in," said Dr. Johnson, "at the eleventh hour; but you shall be paid the same with your fellow-labourers. Francis, put into Dr. Warren's coach a copy of the 'English Poets.'"

381. *Fear of Death.*

Some years before, some person in a company at Salisbury, of which Dr. Johnson was one, vouched for the company, that there was nobody in it afraid of death.—"Speak for yourself, Sir," said Johnson, "for indeed I am." "I did not say of *dying*," replied the other; "but of death, meaning its consequences." "And so I mean," rejoined the Doctor; "I am very seriously afraid of the consequences."

(1) See *ante*, Vol. VI. p. 98.

PART XI.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON, BY THE REV. MR. PARKER. (1)

382. *Stow-Hill.*

DR. JOHNSON's friendship for Mrs. Elizabeth Aston commenced at the palace in Lichfield, the residence of Mr. Walmesley: with Mrs. Gastrel he became acquainted in London, at the house of her brother-in-law, Mr. Hervey. During the Doctor's annual visits to his daughter-in-law, Lucy Porter, he spent much of his time at Stow Hill, where Mrs. Gastrel and Mrs. Elizabeth Aston resided. They were the daughters of Sir Thomas Aston, of Aston Hall in Cheshire, of whom it is said, that being applied to for some account of his family, to illustrate the history of Cheshire, he replied, that "the title and estate had descended from father to son for thirty generations, and that he believed they were neither much richer nor much poorer than they were at first."

383. *Dr. Hunter. — Miss Seward.*

He used to say of Dr. Hunter (2), master of the free grammar school, Lichfield, that he never taught a boy in his life — he whipped and they learned. Hunter was a pompous man, and never entered the school without his gown and cassock, and his wig full dressed. He had a remarkably stern look, and Dr. Johnson said, he could tremble at the sight of Miss Seward, she was so like her grandfather.

(1) The following anecdotes are told by Mr. Parker, from the relation of Mrs. Aston and her sister. — C.

(2) See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 40.

384. *Lives of the Poets.*

Mrs. Gastrel was on a visit at Mr. Hervey's, in London, at the time that Johnson was writing the Rambler; the printer's boy would often come after him to their house, and wait while he wrote off a paper for the press in a room full of company. A great portion of the Lives of the Poets was written at Stow-Hill: he had a table by one of the windows, which was frequently surrounded by five or six ladies engaged in work or conversation. Mrs. Gastrel had a very valuable edition of Bailey's Dictionary, to which he often referred. She told him that Miss Seward said that he had made poetry of no value by his criticism. "Why, my dear lady," replied he, "if silver is dirty, it is not the less valuable for a good scouring."

385. *Climbing.*

A large party had one day been invited to meet the Doctor at Stow-Hill: the dinner waited far beyond the usual hour, and the company were about to sit down, when Johnson appeared at the great gate; he stood for some time in deep contemplation, and at length began to climb it, and, having succeeded in clearing it, advanced with hasty strides towards the house. On his arrival Mrs. Gastrel asked him, "if he had forgotten that there was a small gate for foot passengers by the side of the carriage entrance." "No, my dear lady, by no means," replied the Doctor; "but I had a mind to try whether I could climb a gate now as I used to do when I was a lad."

386. *Cato's Soliloquy.*

One day Mrs. Gastrel set a little girl to repeat to him Cato's soliloquy, which she went through very correctly. The Doctor, after a pause, asked the child, "What was to bring Cato to an end?" She said, it was a knife. "No, my dear, it was not so." "My

aunt Polly said it was a knife." "Why, aunt Polly's knife *may do*, but it was a *dagger*, my dear." He then asked her the meaning of "[illegible] and antidote," which she was unable to give. Mrs. Gastrel said, "You cannot expect so young a child to know the meaning of such words." He then said, "My dear, how many pence are there in *sixpence*?" "I cannot tell, Sir," was the half-terrified reply. On this, addressing himself to Mrs. Gastrel, he said, "Now, my dear lady, can any thing be more ridiculous than to teach a child Cato's soliloquy, who does not know how many pence there are in sixpence?"

887. *Charity.*

The ladies at Stow-Hill would occasionally rebuke Dr. Johnson for the indiscriminate exercise of his charity to all who applied for it. "There was that woman," said one of them, "to whom you yesterday gave half-a-crown, why she was at church to-day in long sleeves and ribands." "Well, my dear," replied Johnson, "and if it gave the woman pleasure, why should she not wear them?"

888. *Gilbert Walmesley.*

He had long promised to write Mr. Walmesley's epitaph, and Mrs. W. waited for it, in order to erect a monument to her husband's memory: procrastination, however, one of the Doctor's few failings, prevented its being finished; he was engaged upon it in his last illness, and when the physicians, at his own request, informed him of his danger, he pushed the papers from before him, saying, "It was too late to write the epitaph of another, when he should so soon want one himself."

PART XII.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON,

BY MRS. ROSE.(1)

389. *The Dockers.*

DR. MUDGE used to relate, as a proof of Dr. Johnson's quick discernment into character: — When he was on a visit to Dr. Mudge at Plymouth, the inhabitants of the Dock (now Devonport) were very desirous of their town being supplied with water, to effect which it was necessary to obtain the consent of the corporation of Plymouth; this was obstinately refused, the Dock being considered as an upstart. And a rival, Alderman Tolcher, who took a very strong part, called one morning, and immediately opened on the subject to Dr. Johnson, who appeared to give great attention, and, when the alderman had ceased speaking, replied, "You are perfectly right, Sir; I would let the rogues die of thirst, for I hate a Docker from my heart." The old man went away quite delighted, and told all his acquaintances how completely "the great Dr. Johnson was on *his* side of the question." (2)

(1) Mrs. Rose, who has obligingly communicated these anecdotes, is the daughter of Dr. Farr, of Plymouth, and the daughter-in-law of Dr. Johnson's old friend, Dr. Rose, of Chiswick. — C.

(2) This story is told by Mr. Boswell, and commented upon by Mr. Blakeway (*antè*, Vol. II. p. 148.), as if Dr. Johnson had *seriously* entered into the spirit of the contest; whereas Dr. Mudge, more naturally, represents him as *flattering*, with an ironical vehemence, the prejudices of the worthy alderman, who is known, from other circumstances, to have been of a very *zealous* disposition. — C.

390. Calumny. — Ridicule.

It was after the publication of the Lives of the Poets that Dr. Farr, being engaged to dine with Sir Joshua Reynolds, mentioned, on coming in, that, in his way, he had seen a caricature, which he thought clever, of the nine muses flogging Dr. Johnson round Parnassus. The admirers of Gray and others, who thought their favourites hardly treated in the Lives, were laughing at Dr. Farr's account of the print, when Dr. Johnson was himself announced. Dr. Farr being the only stranger, Sir Joshua introduced him, and, to Dr. Farr's infinite embarrassment, repeated what he had just been telling them. Johnson was not at all surly on the occasion, but said, turning to Dr. Farr, "Sir, I am very glad to hear this. I hope the day will never arrive when I shall neither be the object of calumny or ridicule, for then I shall be neglected and forgotten." (1)

391. "Fiddle-de-dee."

It was near the close of his life that two young ladies, who were warm admirers of his works, but had never seen himself, went to Bolt Court, and, asking if he was at home, were shown up stairs, where he was writing. He laid down his pen on their entrance, and, as they stood before him, one of the females repeated a speech of some length, previously prepared for the occasion. It was an enthusiastic effusion, which, when the speaker had finished, she panted for her idol's reply. What was her mortification when all he said was, "Fiddle-de-dee, my dear."

(1) This was his usual declaration on all such occasions. If Johnson had been an amateur author, abuse and even criticism would no doubt have given him pain, but, to an author by profession, and one who, for so many years, had lived by his pen, the greatest misfortune would be neglect; for his daily bread depended on the sensation his works might create (see anté, Vol. VII. p. 246.). This observation will be found applicable to many other cases. — C.

392. *Hayley.*

Much pains were taken by Mr. Hayley's friends to prevail on Dr. Johnson to read "The Triumphs of Temper," when it was in its zenith; at last he consented, but never got beyond the two first pages, of which he uttered a few words of contempt that I have now forgotten. They were, however, carried to the author, who revenged himself by portraying Johnson as *Rumble* in his comedy of "The Mausoleum;" and subsequently he published, without his name, a "Dialogue in the Shades between Lord Chesterfield and Dr. Johnson," more distinguished for malignity than wit. Being anonymous, and possessing very little merit, it fell still-born from the press.

393. *Mrs. Montagu. — Lord Lyttelton.*

Dr. Johnson sent his "Life of Lord Lyttelton" in MS. to Mrs. Montagu, who was much dissatisfied with it, and thought her friend every way underrated; but the Doctor made no alteration. When he subsequently made one of a party at Mrs. Montagu's, he addressed his hostess two or three times after dinner, with a view to engage her in conversation: receiving only cold and brief answers, he said, in a low voice, to General Paoli, who sat next him, and who told me the story, "You see, Sir, I am no longer the man for Mrs. Montagu."

394. *Favourite Couplet.*

Mrs. Piozzi related to me, that when Dr. Johnson one day observed, that poets in general preferred some one couplet they had written to any other, she replied, that she did not suppose he had a favourite; he told her she was mistaken — he thought his best lines were: —

> "The encumber'd oar scarce leaves the hostile coast,
> Through purple billows and a floating host."

PART XIII.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON,

BY WILLIAM SEWARD, ESQ. (1)

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395. *Sir Robert Walpole.*

DR. JOHNSON said one day of Sir Robert Walpole, that he was the best minister this country ever had; "for," said he, "he would have kept it in perpetual peace, if we," — meaning the Tories and those in opposition to him, — "would have let him."

396. *Romantic Virtue.*

Dr. Johnson used to advise his friends to be upon their guard against romantic virtue, as being founded upon no settled principle; "a plank," said he, "that is tilted up at one end, must of course fall down on the other."

397. *Little Books.*

Another admonition of his was, never to go out without some little book or other in their pocket. "Much time," added he, "is lost by waiting, by travelling, &c., and this may be prevented, by making use of every possible opportunity for improvement."

398. *Languages.*

"The knowledge of various languages," said he, "may be kept up by occasionally using bibles and prayer-books in them at church."

(1) [Author of "Anecdotes of Distinguished Persons," &c. See *ante*, Vol. III. p. 76. *n.*]

399. *Christian Religion.*

In a conversation with the Duc de Chaulnes, the duke said to Johnson, "that the morality of the different religions existing in the world was nearly the same." "But you must acknowledge, my lord," said the Doctor, "that the Christian religion puts it upon its proper basis — the f[illegible] [illegible]d love of God."

[illegible]. [illegible]r. *Burney.*

Of the musical tracts of Dr. Burney this great critic in style thought so highl[illegible] [illegible] he [illegible] a friend of h[illegible] after he had published [illegible] Scotch Tou., [illegible] Sir, [illegible] Burney in my eye all the while I was writing my Journal."

401. *Mrs. Montagu. —* [illegible]*ore. — Voltai*[illegible]*.*

Of Mrs. Montagu's el[illegible] [illegible] E[illegible]y upon Shakspeare," he always said "[illegible] it was *ad hominem*, that it was conclusive agai[illegible] Voltaire; and that she had done what she intended [illegible] to. (1)

402. *Prefac*[illegible] [illegible]*hakspeare.*

Johnson's Preface to his edition of Shakspeare was styled by Dr. Adam Smith, the most manly piece of criticism that was ever published in any country.

403. *Infant Hercules.*

Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his picture of the Infant Hercules, painted for the Empress of Russia, in the person of Tiresias the soothsayer, gave an adumbration of Johnson's manner.

404. *Duc de Montmorenci.*

In a conversation with Dr. Johnson on the subject of this nobleman, he said, "Had I been Ri[illegible], I could not have found it in my heart to hav[illegible] [illegible]e,

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. III. p. 90., and Vol. I[illegible]

first Christian baron to die by the hands of the executioner."

405. *Music.*

Dr. Johnson was observed by a musical friend of his to be extremely inattentive at a concert, whilst a celebrated solo player was running up the divisions and subdivisions of notes upon his violin. His friend, to induce him to take greater notice of what was going on, told him how extremely difficult it was. "Difficult do you call it, Sir?" replied the Doctor: "I wish it were impossible!"

406. *Voltaire.*

Dr. Johnson said Voltaire's antagonist Fréron, that he was *vir acerrimi ingenii, ac paucarum literarum*; and [illegible] says of him, that "he wrote indifferently well upon every thing."

PART XIV.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON,

BY OZIAS HUMPHRY, R. A. (1)

407. *Johnson in* 1764.

THE day after I wrote my last letter to you I was introduced to Mr. Johnson by a friend: we passed through three very dirty rooms to a little one that looked like

(1) [In a letter to his brother, the Rev. William Humphry, Rector of Kemsing and Seal, in Kent, and Vicar of Birling; from the original, in the possession of Mr. Upcott, dated September [illegible]. For Boswell's account of Mr. Humphry see ante, Vol. [illegible] p. 264.]

an old counting-house, where this great man was sat at his breakfast. The furniture of this room was a very large deal writing-desk, an old walnut-tree table, and five ragged chairs of four different sets. I was very much struck with Mr. Johnson's appearance, and could hardly help thinking him a madman for some time, as he sat waving over his breakfast like a lunatic.

He is a very large man, and was dressed in a dirty brown coat and waistcoat, with breeches that were brown also (though they had been crimson), and an old black wig: his shirt collar and sleeves were unbuttoned; his stockings were down about his feet, which had on them, by way of slippers, an old pair of shoes. He had not been up long when we called on him, which was near one o'clock: he seldom goes to bed till near two in the morning; and Mr. Reynolds tells me he generally drinks tea about an hour after he has supped. We had been some time with him before he began to talk, but at length he began, and, faith, to some purpose! every thing he says is as *correct* as a *second edition*: 't is almost impossible to argue with him, he is so sententious and so knowing.

408. *Sir Joshua Reynolds.*

I asked him, if he had seen Mr. Reynolds's pictures lately. "No, Sir." "He has painted many fine ones." "I know he has," he said, "as I hear he has been fully employed." I told him, I imagined Mr. Reynolds was not much pleased to be overlooked by the court, as he must be conscious of his superior merit. "Not at all displeased," he said, "Mr. Reynolds has too much good sense to be affected by it: when he was younger he believed it would have been agreeable; but now he does not want their favour. It has ever been more profitable to be popular among the people than favoured by the King: it is no reflection on Mr. Reynolds not to be employed by them; but it will be a

reflection for ever on the court not to have employed him. The King, perhaps, knows nothing but that he employs the best painter; and as for the queen, I don't imagine she has any other idea of a picture, but that it is a thing composed of many colours."

409. *Bath.*

When Mr. Johnson understood that I had lived some time in Bath, he asked me many questions that led, indeed, to a general description of it. He seemed very well pleased; but remarked, that men and women bathing together, as they do at Bath, is an instance of barbarity, that he believed could not be paralleled in any part of the world. He entertained us about an hour and a half in this manner, then we took our leave. I must not omit to add, that I am informed he denies himself many conveniences, though he cannot well afford any, that he may have more in his power to give in charities.

Part XV.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON,

BY SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. (1)

410. *Johnson's Conversation.— Sir Joshua Reynolds's "Discourses."— Art of Thinking.*

I remember Mr. Burke, speaking of the Essays of Sir Francis Bacon, said, he thought them the best of his works. Dr. Johnson was of opinion, that "their excellence and their value consisted in being the ob-

(1) [From an unfinished Discourse, found by Mr. Malone among Sir Joshua's loose papers. See Works, vol. i. p. 9.]

servations of a strong mind operating upon life; and in consequence you find there what you seldom find in other books." It is this kind of excellence which gives a value to the performances of artists also. It is the thoughts expressed in the works of Michael Angelo, Coreggio, Raffaelle, Parmegiano, and perhaps some of the old Gothic masters, and not the inventions of Pietro da Cortona, Carlo Marati, Luca Giordano, and others, that I might mention, which we seek after with avidity: from the former we learn to think originally.

May I presume to introduce myself on this occasion, and even to mention, as an instance of the truth of what I have remarked, the very Discourses which I have had the honour of delivering from this place? Whatever merit they have, must be imputed, in a great measure, to the education which I may be said to have had under Dr. Johnson. I do not mean to say, though it certainly would be to the credit of these Discourses, if I could say it with truth, that he contributed even a single sentiment to them; but he qualified my mind to think justly. No man had, like him, the faculty of teaching inferior minds the art of thinking. Perhaps other men might have equal knowledge; but few were so communicative. His great pleasure was to talk to those who looked up to him. It was here he exhibited his wonderful powers. In mixed company, and frequently in company that *ought* to have looked up to him, many, thinking they had a character for learning to support, considered it as beneath them to enlist in the train of his auditors; and to such persons he certainly did not appear to advantage, being often impetuous and overbearing.

The desire of shining in conversation was in him, indeed, a predominant passion; and if it must be attributed to vanity, let it at the same time be recollected, that it produced that loquaciousness from which his more intimate friends derived considerable advantage. The

observations which he made on poetry, on life, and on every thing about us, I applied to our art; with what success, others must judge. Perhaps an artist in his studies should pursue the same conduct; and, instead of patching up a particular work on the narrow plan of imitation, rather endeavour to acquire the art and power of thinking.

411. *Johnson's Style of Conversation.*

[*The following jeu d'esprit was written by Sir Joshua Reynolds to illustrate a remark which he had made, that "Dr Johnson considered Garrick as his property, and would never suffer any one to praise or abuse him but himself." In the first of these supposed dialogues, Sir Joshua himself, by high encomiums upon Garrick, is represented as drawing down upon him Johnson's censure; in the second, Mr. Gibbon, by taking the opposite side, calls forth his praise.*]

TWO DIALOGUES IN IMITATION OF JOHNSON'S STYLE OF CONVERSATION. [1]

JOHNSON AGAINST GARRICK.

Dr. Johnson and Sir Joshua Reynolds.

REYNOLDS. Let me alone. I'll bring him out. (*Aside.* I have been thinking, Dr. Johnson, this morning, on a

(2) These dialogues were printed in 1816 from the MS. of Sir Joshua, by his niece, Lady Thomond. they were not published, but distributed by her ladyship to some friends of Dr. Johnson and Sir Joshua. The copy which I have was spontaneously transmitted to me by Mrs. Gwynn, the friend of Goldsmith and of Johnson, whose early beauty is celebrated in the first part of this work (Vol. II. p. 191.), and who is still distinguished for her amiable character, and high mental accomplishments. Lady Thomond, in the prefatory note, calls this a "*jeu d'esprit*," but I was informed by the late Sir George Beaumont, who knew all the parties, and to whom Reynolds himself gave a copy of it, that if the words *jeu d'esprit* were to be understood to imply that it was altogether an invention of Sir Joshua's, the term would be erroneous. [illegible]

matter that has puzzled me very much; it is a subject that I dare say has *often passed* in your thoughts, and though *I* cannot, I dare say *you* have made up your mind upon it.

JOHNSON. Tilly fally! what is all this preparation, what is all this mighty matter?

REV. Why, it is a very weighty matter. The subject I have been thinking upon is, predestination and freewill, *two* things I cannot reconcile together for the life of me; in my opinion, Dr. Johnson, freewill and foreknowledge cannot be reconciled.

JOHNS. Sir, it is not of very great importance what your opinion is upon such a question.

REV. But I meant only, Dr. Johnson, to know your opinion.

JOHNS. No, Sir, you meant no such thing; you meant only to show these gentlemen that you are not the man they took you to be, but that you think of high matters sometimes, and that you may have the credit of having it said that you held an argument with Sam Johnson on predestination and freewill; a subject of that magnitude as to have engaged the attention of the world, to have perplexed the wisdom of man for these two thousand years; a subject on which the fallen angels, who *had yet not lost their original brightness*, find themselves *in wandering mazes lost.* That such a subject could be discussed in the levity of convivial conversation, is a degree of absurdity beyond what is easily conceivable.

REV. It is so, as you say, to be sure; I talked once to our friend Garrick upon this subject, but I remember we could make nothing of it.

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and many of the expressions, of the dialogues did really occur; Sir Joshua did little more than collect, as if into *two* conversations, what had been uttered at *many*, and heighten the effect by the juxtaposition of such discordant opinions.—C.

JOHNS. O noble pair![*]

REY. Garrick was a clever fellow, Dr. J.; Garrick, take him altogether, was certainly a very great man.

JOHNS. Garrick, Sir, may be a great man in your opinion, as far as I know, but he was not so in mine; little things are great to little men.

REY. I have heard you say, Dr. Johnson ——

JOHNS. Sir, you never heard me say that David Garrick was a great man; you may have heard me say that Garrick was a good repeater — of other men's words — words put into his mouth by other men; this makes but a faint approach towards being a great man.

REY. But take Garrick upon the whole, now, in regard to conversation ——

JOHNS. Well, Sir, in regard to conversation, I never discovered in the conversation of David Garrick any intellectual energy, any wide grasp of thought, any extensive comprehension of mind, or that he possessed any of those powers to which *great* could, with any degree of propriety, be applied.

REY. But still ——

JOHNS. Hold, Sir, I have not done — there are, to be sure, in the laxity of colloquial speech, various kinds of greatness; a man may be a great tobacconist, a man may be a great painter, he may be likewise a great mimic: now you may be the one, and Garrick the other, and yet neither of you be great men.

REY. But, Dr. Johnson ——

JOHNS. Hold, Sir, I have often lamented how dangerous it is to investigate and to discriminate character, to men who have no discriminative powers.

REY. But Garrick, as a companion, I heard you say — no longer ago than last Wednesday, at Mr. Thrale's table ——

JOHNS. You tease me, Sir. Whatever you may have heard me say, no longer ago than last Wednesday, at Mr. Thrale's table, I tell you I do not say so now:

besides, as I said before, you may not have understood me, you misapprehended me, you may not have heard me.

REY. I am very sure I heard you.

JOHNS. Besides, besides, Sir, besides, — do you not know, — are you so ignorant as not to know, that it is the highest degree of rudeness to quote a man against himself?

REY. But if you differ from yourself, and give one pinion to-day ——

JOHNS. Have done, Sir; the company, ou see, are tired, as well as myself."

T'OTHER SIDE.

Dr. Johnson and Mr. Gibbon.

JOHNSON. No, Sir; Garrick's fame was prodigious, not only in England, but over all Europe. Even in Russia I have been told he was a proverb; when any one had repeated well, he was called a second Garrick.

GIBBON. I think he had full as much reputation as he deserved.

JOHN. I do not pretend to know, Sir, what your meaning may be, by saying he had as much reputation as he deserved; he deserved much, and he had much.

GIB. Why, surely, Dr. Johnson, his merit was in small things only, he had none of those qualities that make a real great man.

JOHNS. Sir, I as little understand what your meaning may be when you speak of the qualities that make a great man; it is a vague term. Garrick was no common man; a man above the common size of men may surely, without any great impropriety, be called a great man. In my opinion he has very reasonably fulfilled the prophecy which he once reminded me of having made to his mother, when she asked me how little David went on at school, that I should say to her, that

he would come to be hanged, or come to be a great man. No, Sir, it is undoubtedly true that the same qualities, united with virtue or with vice, make a hero or a rogue, a great general or a highwayman. Now Garrick, we are sure, was never hanged, and in regard to his being a great man, you must take the whole man together. It must be considered in how many things Garrick excelled in which every man desires to excel: setting aside his excellence as an actor, in which he is acknowledged to be unrivalled; as a man, as a poet, as a convivial companion, you will find but few his equals, and none his superior. As a man, he was kind, friendly, benevolent, and generous.

GIB. Of Garrick's generosity I never heard; I understood his character to be totally the reverse, and that he was reckoned to have loved money.

JOHNS. That he loved money, nobody will dispute; who does not? but if you mean, by loving money, that he was parsimonious to a fault, Sir, you have been misinformed. To Foote, and such scoundrels, who circulated those reports, to such profligate spendthrifts prudence is meanness, and economy is avarice. That Garrick, in early youth, was brought up in strict habits of economy, I believe, and that they were necessary, I have heard from himself; to suppose that Garrick might inadvertently act from this habit, and be saving in small things, can be no wonder: but let it be remembered at the same time, that if he was frugal by habit, he was liberal from principle; that when he acted from reflection, he did what his fortune enabled him to do, and what was expected from such a fortune. I remember no instance of David's parsimony but once, when he stopped Mrs. Woffington from replenishing the tea-pot; it was already, he said, as red as blood; and this instance is doubtful, and happened many years ago. In the latter part of his life I observed no blameable parsimony in David; his table was elegant and

even splendid; his house both in town and country, his equipage, and I think all his habits of life, were such as might be expected from a man who had acquired great riches. In regard to his generosity, which you seem to question, I shall only say, there is no man to whom I would apply with more confidence of success, for the loan of two hundred pounds to assist a common friend, than to David, and this too with very little, if any, probability of its being repaid.

GIB. You were going to say something of him as a writer — you don't rate him very high as a poet.

JOHNS. Sir, a man may be a respectable poet without being a Homer, as a man may be a good player without being a Garrick. In the lighter kinds of poetry, in the appendages of the drama, he was, *if not the first, in the very first class.* He had a readiness and facility, a dexterity of mind that appeared extraordinary even to men of experience, and who are not apt to wonder from ignorance. Writing prologues, epilogues, and epigrams, he said he considered as his trade, and he was, what a man should be, always, and at all times, ready at his trade. He required two hours for a prologue or epilogue, and five minutes for an epigram. Once at Burke's table the company proposed a subject, and Garrick finished his epigram within the time; the same experiment was repeated in the garden, and with the same success.

GIB. Garrick had some flippancy of parts, to be sure, and was brisk and lively in company, and by the help of mimicry and story-telling, made himself a pleasant companion; but here the whole world gave the superiority to Foote, and Garrick himself appears to have felt as if his genius was rebuked by the superior powers of Foote. It has been often observed, that Garrick never dared to enter into competition with him, but was content to act an under part to bring Foote out.

JOHNS. That this conduct of Garrick's might be in-

terpreted by the gross minds of Foote and his friends, as if he was afraid to encounter him, I can easily imagine. Of the natural superiority of Garrick over Foote, this conduct is an instance: he disdained entering into competition with such a fellow, and made him the buffoon of the company; or, as you say, brought him out. And what was at last brought out but coarse jests and vulgar merriment, indecency and impiety, a relation of events which, upon the face of them, could never have happened, characters grossly conceived and as coarsely represented? Foote was even no mimic; he went out of himself, it is true, but without going into another man; he was excelled by Garrick even in this, which is considered as Foote's greatest excellence. Garrick, besides his exact imitation of the voice and gesture of his original, to a degree of refinement of which Foote had no conception, exhibited the mind and mode of thinking of the person imitated. Besides, Garrick confined his powers within the limits of decency; he had a character to preserve, Foote had none. By Foote's buffoonery and broad-faced merriment, private friendship, public decency, and every thing estimable amongst men, were trod under foot. We all know the difference of their reception in the world. No man, however high in rank or literature, but was proud to know Garrick, and was glad to have him at his table; no man ever considered or treated Garrick as a player; he may be said to have stepped out of his own rank into a higher, and by raising himself, he raised the rank of his profession. At a convivial table his exhilarating powers were unrivalled; he was lively, entertaining, quick in discerning the ridicule of life, and as ready in representing it; and on graver subjects there were few topics in which he could not bear his part. It is injurious to the character of Garrick to be named in the same breath with Foote. That Foote was admitted sometimes into good company (to do the man what

credit I can) I will allow; but then it was merely to play tricks: Foote's merriment was that of a buffoon, and Garrick's that of a gentleman.

GEN. I have been told, on the contrary, that Garrick in company had not the easy manners of a gentleman.

JOHNS. Sir, I don't know what you may have been told, or what your ideas may be, of the manners of a gentleman: Garrick had no vulgarity in his manners; it is true Garrick had not the airiness of a fop, nor did he assume an affected indifference to what was passing; he did not lounge from the table to the window, and from thence to the fire, or, whilst you were addressing your discourse to him, turn from you and talk to his next neighbour, or give any indication that he was tired of your company: if such manners form your ideas of a fine gentleman, Garrick certainly had them not.

GEN. I mean that Garrick was more overawed by the presence of the great, and more obsequious to rank, than Foote, who considered himself as their equal, and treated them with the same familiarity as they treated each other.

JOHNS. He did so, and what did the fellow get by it? The grossness of his mind prevented him from seeing that this familiarity was merely suffered as they would play with a dog; he got no ground by affecting to call peers by their surnames; the foolish fellow fancied that lowering them was raising himself to their level; this affectation of familiarity with the great, this childish ambition of momentary exaltation obtained by the neglect of those ceremonies which custom has established as the barriers between one order of society and another, only showed his folly and meanness; he did not see that by encroaching on others' dignity, he puts himself in their power either to be repelled with helpless indignity, or endured by clemency and condescension. Garrick, by paying due respect to rank, respected himself; what he gave was returned, and

what was returned he kept for ever; his advancement was on firm ground, he was recognised in public as well as respected in private, and as no man was ever more courted and better received by the public, so no man was ever less spoiled by its flattery: Garrick continued advancing to the last, till he had acquired every advantage that high birth or title could bestow, except the precedence of going into a room; but when he was there, he was treated with as much attention as the first man at the table. It is to the credit of Garrick, that he never laid any claim to this distinction; it was as voluntarily allowed as if it had been his birthright. In this, I confess, I looked on David with some degree of envy, not so much for the respect he received, as for the manner of its being acquired; what fell into his lap unsought, I have been forced to claim. I began the world by fighting my way. There was something about me that invited insult, or at least a disposition to neglect, and I was equally disposed to repel insult and to claim attention, and I fear continue too much in this disposition now it is no longer necessary; I receive at present as much favour as I have a right to expect. I am not one of the complainers of the neglect of merit.

GIB. *Your* pretensions, Dr. Johnson, nobody will dispute; I cannot place Garrick on the same footing: your reputation will continue increasing after your death, when Garrick will be totally forgotten; you will be for ever considered as a classic ——

JOHNS. Enough, Sir, enough; the company would be better pleased to see us quarrel than bandying compliments.

GIB. But you must allow, Dr. Johnson, that Garrick was too much a slave to fame, or rather to the mean ambition of living with the great, terribly afraid of making himself cheap even with them; by which he debarred himself of much pleasant society. Employing so much attention, and so much management upon such

little things, implies, I think, a little mind. It was observed by his friend Colman, that he never went into company but with a plot how to get out of it; he was every minute called out, and went off or returned as there was or was not a probability of his shining.

JOHNS. In regard to his mean ambition, as you call it, of living with the great, what was the boast of Pope, and is every man's wish, can be no reproach to Garrick; he who says he despises it knows he lies. That Garrick husbanded his fame, the fame which he had justly acquired both at the theatre and at the table, is not denied; but where is the blame, either in the one or the other, of leaving as little as he could to chance? Besides, Sir, consider what you have said; you first deny Garrick's pretensions to fame, and then accuse him of too great an attention to preserve what he never possessed.

GIB. I don't understand ——

JOHNS. Sir, I can't help that.

GIB. Well, but Dr. Johnson, you will not vindicate him in his over and above attention to his fame, his inordinate desire to exhibit himself to new men, like a coquette, ever seeking after new conquests, to the total neglect of old friends and admirers;—

"He threw off his friends like a huntsman his pack,"

always looking out for new game.

JOHNS. When you quoted the line from Goldsmith, you ought, in fairness, to have given what followed:

"He knew when he pleased he could whistle them back;

which implies at least that he possessed a power over other men's minds approaching to fascination; but consider, Sir, what is to be done: here is a man whom every other man desired to know. Garrick could not receive and cultivate all, according to each man's conception of his own value: we are all apt enough to consider ourselves as possessing a right to be excepted

from the common crowd; besides, Sir, I do not see why that should be imputed to him as a crime, which we all so irresistibly feel and practise; we all make a greater exertion of the presence of new men than old acquaintance; it is undoubtedly true that Garrick divided his attention among so many, that but little was left to the share of any individual; like the extension and dissipation of water into dew, there was not quantity united sufficiently to quench any man's thirst; but this is the inevitable state of things: Garrick, no more than another man, could unite what, in their natures, are incompatible.

GIB. But Garrick not only was excluded by this means from real friendship, but accused of treating those whom he called friends with insincerity and double dealings.

JOHNS. Sir, it is not true; his character in that respect is misunderstood: Garrick was, to be sure, very ready in promising, but he intended at that time to fulfil his promise; he intended no deceit: his politeness or his good-nature, call it which you will, made him unwilling to deny; he wanted the courage to say *No*, even to unreasonable demands. This was the great error of his life: by raising expectations which he did not, perhaps could not, gratify, he made many enemies; at the same time it must be remembered, that this error proceeded from the same cause which produced many of his virtues. Friendships from warmth of temper too suddenly taken up, and too violent to continue, ended as they were like to do, in disappointment; enmity succeeded disappointment; his friends became his enemies; and those having been fostered in his bosom, well knew his sensibility to reproach, and they took care that he should be amply supplied with such bitter potions as they were capable of administering; their impotent efforts he ought to have despised, but he felt them; nor did he affect insensibility.

GIB. And that sensibility probably shortened his life.

JOHNS. No, Sir, he died of a disorder of which you or any other man may die, without being killed by too much sensibility.

GIB. But you will allow, however, that this sensibility, those fine feelings, made him the great actor he was.

JOHNS. This is all cant, fit only for kitchen wenches and chambermaids: Garrick's trade was to represent passion, not to feel it. Ask Reynolds whether he felt the distress of Count Hugolino when he drew it.

GIB. But surely he feels the passion at the moment he is representing it.

JOHNS. About as much as Punch feels. That Garrick himself gave into this foppery of feelings I can easily believe; but he knew at the same time that he lied. He might think it right, as far as I know, to have what fools imagined he ought to have, but it is amazing that any one should be so ignorant as to think that an actor will risk his reputation by depending on the feelings that shall be excited in the presence of two hundred people, on the repetition of certain words which he has repeated two hundred times before in what actors call their study. No, Sir, Garrick left nothing to chance, every gesture, every expression of countenance, and variation of voice, was settled in his closet before he set his foot upon the stage." (1)

(1) This is conformable with the opinion of Grimm and Diderot, and with the admission of Mr. Kemble; but it must not be understood too literally. A great actor prepares in his study, postures, attitudes, the particular mode of uttering certain passages, and even the tone which is to be adopted; and having once ascertained, both by thought and experience, what is best, he will naturally adhere to that, however often he may play the part; but it is equally certain, that there is a large portion of the merit of a great theatrical exhibition which is not reducible to any rule, and which depends, not only on the general powers of the performer, but on his health, his spirits, and other per-

PART XVI.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON, BY MADAME D'ARBLAY. (1)

412. *Mr. Bewley. — Johnson's Hearth-broom.*

IN 1760, Mr. Burney found an opportunity of paying his personal respects to Dr. Johnson; who then resided in chambers in the Temple. While awaiting the appearance of his revered host, Mr. Burney recollected a supplication from Mr. Bewley, the philosopher of Massingham, to be indulged with some token, however trifling or common, of his friend's admission to the habitation of this great man. Vainly, however, Mr. Burney looked around the apartment for something that he might innoxiously purloin. Nothing but coarse and necessary furniture was in view; nothing portable — not even a wafer, the cover of a letter, or a split pen was to be caught; till, at length, he had the happiness to espy an old hearth-broom in the chimney corner. From this, with hasty glee, he cut off a bristly wisp, which he hurried into his pocket-book; and afterwards

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sonal circumstances of the moment which may tend to encourage or restrain his powers. And it may be safely affirmed, that although no actor ever fancies himself Othello, or any actress Calista, yet that the unpremeditated emotions last alluded to constitute a great part of the charm which distinguishes on the stage *excellence* from *mediocrity*. — C.

(1) [Formerly, the celebrated Miss Fanny Burney, author of "Evelina," &c.; from whose Memoirs of her father, Dr. Burney, these anecdotes are taken.]

formally folded in silver paper, and forwarded, in a frank to Lord Orford, for Mr. Bewley; by whom the burlesque offering was hailed with good-humoured acclamation, and preserved through life. (1)

413. *Music.*

Dr. Johnson, who had no ear for music, had accustomed himself, like many other great writers who have had that same, and frequently sole, deficiency, to speak slightingly both of the art and of its professors: and it was not till after he had become intimately acquainted with Dr. Burney and his various merits, that he ceased to join in a jargon so unworthy of his liberal judgment, as that of excluding musicians and their art from celebrity. The first symptom that he showed of a tendency to conversion upon this subject, was upon hearing the following paragraph read, accidentally, aloud by Mrs. Thrale, from the preface to the History of Music, while it was yet in manuscript: — "The love of lengthened tones and modulated sounds, seems a passion implanted in human nature throughout the globe; as we hear of no people, however wild and savage in other particulars, who have not music of some kind or other, with which they seem greatly delighted." — "Sir," cried Dr. Johnson, after a little pause, "this assertion I believe may be right." And then, see-sawing a minute or two on his chair, he forcibly added, "All animated nature loves music — except myself!"

Some time later, when Dr. Burney perceived that he was generally gaining ground in the house, he said to Mrs. Thrale, who had civilly been listening to some favourite air that he had been playing, "I have yet hopes, Madam, with the assistance of my pupil, to see yours become a musical family. Nay, I even hope, Sir," turning to Dr. Johnson, "I shall some time or

(1) See *ante*, Vol. VIII. p. 116.

other make you, also, sensible of the power of my art." "Sir," answered the Doctor, smiling, "I shall be very glad to have a new sense put into me!"

414. *Dr. Burney.*

The Tour to the Hebrides being then in hand, Dr. Burney inquired of what size and form the book would be. "Sir," he replied, with a little bow, "you are my model!" Impelled by the same kindness, when my father lamented the disappointment of the public in Hawkesworth's Voyages, — "Sir," he cried, "the public is always disappointed in books of travels; — except yours." And afterwards, he said, that he had hardly ever read any book quite through in his life; but added, "Chamier and I, Sir, however, read all your travels through; except, perhaps, the description of the great pipes in the organs of Germany and the Netherlands."

415. *Streatham Library.*

Mr. Thrale had lately fitted up a rational, readable well-chosen library. It were superfluous to say that he had neither authors for show, nor bindings for vanity, when it is known, that while it was forming, he placed merely one hundred pounds in Dr. Johnson's hands for its completion; though such was his liberality, and such his opinion of the wisdom as well as knowledge of the Doctor in literary matters, that he would not for a moment have hesitated to subscribe to the highest estimate that the Doctor might have preposed. One hundred pounds, according to the expensive habits of the present day, of decorating books like courtiers and coxcombs, rather than like students and philosophers, would scarcely purchase a single row for a book-case of the length of Mr. Thrale's at Streatham; though, under such guidance as that of Dr. Johnson,

to whom all finery seemed foppery, and all foppery futility, that sum, added to the books naturally inherited, or already collected, amply sufficed for the unsophisticated reader, where no peculiar pursuit, or unlimited spirit of research, demanded a collection for reference rather than for instruction and enjoyment.

416. *Streatham Gallery.*

This was no sooner accomplished, than Mr. Thrale resolved to surmount these treasures for the mind by a similar regale for the eyes, in selecting the persons he most loved to contemplate, from amongst his friends and favourites, to preside over the literature that stood highest in his estimation. And, that his portrait painter might go hand in hand in judgment with his collector of books, he fixed upon the matchless Sir Joshua Reynolds to add living excellence to dead perfection, by giving him the personal resemblance of the following elected set; every one of which occasionally made a part of the brilliant society of Streatham. Mrs. Thrale and her eldest daughter were in one piece, over the fireplace, at full length. The rest of the pictures were all three-quarters. Mr. Thrale was over the door leading to his study. The general collection then began by Lord Sandys and Lord Westcote, two early noble friends of Mr. Thrale. Then followed Dr. Johnson, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Burke, Mr. Garrick, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Baretti, Sir Robert Chambers, and Sir Joshua Reynolds himself. All painted in the highest style of the great master; who much delighted in this his Streatham gallery. There was place left but for one more frame, when the acquaintance with Dr. Burney began at Streatham; and the charm of his conversation and manners, joined to his celebrity in letters, so quickly won upon the master as well as the mistress of the mansion, that he was presently selected for the honour of filling up this last chasm in the chain of Streatham

worthies. To this flattering distinction, which Dr. Burney always recognised with pleasure, the public owe the engraving of Bartolozzi, which is prefixed to the History of Music. (1)

417. *Johnson's Kindness of Heart.*

The friendship and kindness of heart of Dr. Johnson were promptly brought into play by this renewed intercourse. Richard, the youngest son of Dr. Burney, born of the second marriage, was then preparing for Winchester School, whither his father purposed conveying him in person. This design was no sooner known at Streatham, where Richard, at that time a beautiful as well as clever boy, was in great favour with Mrs. Thrale, than Dr. Johnson volunteered an offer to accompany the father to Winchester; that he might himself present the son to Dr. Warton, the then celebrated master of that ancient receptacle for the study of youth. Dr. Burney, enchanted by such a mark of regard, gratefully accepted the proposal; and they set out together for Winchester, where Dr. Warton expects them with ardent hospitality.

418. *Dr. Warton.*

Dr. Warton's reception of Dr. Johnson was rather rapturous than glad. Dr. Warton was always called an enthusiast by Dr. Johnson, who, at times, when in gay spirits, and with those with whom he trusted their ebullition, would take off Dr. Warton with the strongest humour; describing, almost convulsively, the ecstasy with which he would seize upon the person nearest to him, to hug in his arms, lest his grasp should be eluded, while he displayed some picture, or some prospect; and indicated, in the midst of contortions and gestures that violently and ludicrously shook, if they did not affright

(1) [See *antè*, p. 127.]

his captive, the particular point of view, or of design, that he wished should be noticed.

419. *Johnson's Humility.*

From Dr. Johnson's internal humility, it is possible that he was not himself aware of the great chasm that separated him from the herd of mankind, when not held to it by the ties of benevolence or of necessity. To talk of humility and Dr. Johnson together, may, perhaps, make the few who remember him smile, and the many who have only heard of him stare. But his humility was not that of thinking more lowlily of himself than of others; it was simply that of thinking so lowlily of others, as to hold his own conscious superiority of but small scale in the balance of intrinsic excellence.

420. *Visit to Dr. Burney.*

I shall now give in detail a narrative of the first appearance of Dr. Johnson at my father's residence in St. Martin's Lane, the house of Sir Isaac Newton. Mrs. and Miss Thrale, Miss Owen, and Mr. Seward, came long before Lexiphanes. Mrs. Thrale is a pretty woman still, though she has some defect in the mouth that looks like a cut, or scar; but her nose is very handsome, her complexion very fair; she has the *embonpoint charmant*, and her eyes are blue and lustrous. She is extremely lively and chatty; and showed none of the supercilious or pedantic airs, so freely, or, rather, so scoffingly attributed to women of learning or celebrity; on the contrary, she is full of sport, remarkably gay, and excessively agreeable. I liked her in every thing except her entrance into the room, which was rather florid and flourishing, as who should say, "It's I — no less a person than Mrs. Thrale!"

The conversation was supported with a great deal of vivacity, as usual when il Signor Padrone is at home. This confab. was broken up by a duet between your

Hettina and, for the first time to company-listeners, Suzette. In the midst of this performance, Dr. Johnson was announced. Every body rose to do him honour; and he returned the attention with the most formal courtesy. My father then, having welcomed him with the warmest respect, whispered to him that music was going forward; which he would not, my father thinks, have found out; and placing him on the best seat vacant, told his daughters to go on with the duet; while Dr. Johnson, intently rolling towards them one eye,— for they say he does not see with the other,— made a grave nod, and gave a dignified motion with one hand, in silent approvance of the proceeding.

But now I am mortified to own, that he is, indeed, very ill-favoured. Yet he has naturally a noble figure; tall, stout, grand, and authoritative: but he stoops horribly; his back is quite round: his mouth is continually opening and shutting, as if he were chewing something; he has a singular method of twirling his fingers, and twisting his hands: his vast body is in constant agitation, see-sawing backwards and forwards: his feet are never a moment quiet; and his whole great person looked often as if it were going to roll itself, quite voluntarily, from his chair to the floor.

His dress, considering the times, and that he had meant to put on all his *best becomes*, for he was engaged to dine with a very fine party at Mrs. Montagu's, was as much out of the common road as his figure. He had a large, full, bushy wig, a snuff-colour coat, with gold buttons (or, peradventure, brass), but no ruffles to his doughty fists; and not, I suppose, to be taken for a Blue, though going to the Blue Queen, he had on very coarse black worsted stockings.

He is shockingly near-sighted; a thousand times more so than either my Padre or myself. He did not even know Mrs. Thrale, till she held out her hand to him; which she did very engagingly. After the first

few minutes, he drew his chair close to the piano-forte, and then bent down his nose quite over the keys, to examine them, and the four hands at work upon them; till poor Hetty and Susan hardly knew how to play on, for fear of touching his phiz; or, which was harder still, how to keep their countenances. When the duet was finished, my father introduced Hettina to him, as an old acquaintance, to whom, when she was a little girl, he had presented his Idler. His answer to this was imprinting on her pretty face — not a half touch of a courtly salute — but a good, real, substantial, and very loud kiss. Every body was obliged to stroke their chins, that they might hide their mouths.

Beyond this chaste embrace, his attention was not to be drawn off two minutes longer from the books, to which he now strided his way. He pored over them, shelf by shelf, almost brushing them with his eye-lashes from near examination. At last, fixing upon something that happened to hit his fancy, he took it down, and, standing aloof from the company, which he seemed clean and clear to forget, he began, without further ceremony, and very composedly, to read to himself; and as intently as if he had been alone in his own study. We were all excessively provoked: for we were languishing, fretting, expiring to hear him talk — not to see him read! — what could that do for us?

421. *Garrick.*

They talked of Mr. Garrick, and his late exhibition before the King; to whom, and to the Queen and Royal Family, he has been reading Lethe in character; *c'est à dire*, in different voices, and theatrically. Mr. Seward gave an amusing account of a fable which Mr. Garrick had written by way of prologue, or introduction, upon this occasion. In this he says, that a blackbird, grown old and feeble, droops his wings, &c., and gives up singing; but, upon being called upon by the eagle, his

voice recovers its powers, his spirits revive, he sets age at defiance, and sings better than ever. "There is not," said Dr. Johnson, "much of the spirit of fabulosity in this fable; for the call of an eagle never yet had much tendency to restore the warbling of a blackbird. 'Tis true, the fabulists frequently make the wolves converse with the lambs; but then, when the conversation is over, the lambs are always devoured: and, in that manner, the eagle, to be sure, may entertain the blackbird; but the entertainment always ends in a feast for the eagle."

"They say," cried Mrs. Thrale, "that Garrick was extremely hurt by the coldness of the King's applause; and that he did not find his reception such as he had expected." "He has been so long accustomed," said Mr. Seward, "to the thundering acclamation of a theatre, that mere calm approbation must necessarily be insipid, nay, dispiriting to him."

"Sir," said Dr. Johnson, "he has no right, in a royal apartment, to expect the hallooing and clamour of the one-shilling gallery. The King, I doubt not, gave him as much applause as was rationally his due. And, indeed, great and uncommon as is the merit of Mr. Garrick, no man will be bold enough to assert that he has not had his just proportion both of fame and profit. He has long reigned the unequalled favourite of the public; and therefore nobody, we may venture to say, will mourn his hard lot, if the King and the Royal Family were not transported into rapture upon hearing him read 'Lethe.' But yet, Mr. Garrick will complain to his friends; and his friends will lament the King's want of feeling and taste. But then, Mr. Garrick will kindly excuse the King. He will say that his Majesty might, perhaps, be thinking of something else! — that the affairs of America might, possibly, occur to him — or some other subject of state, more important, perhaps, than 'Lethe.' But though he will candidly

say this himself, he will not easily forgive his friends if they do not contradict him!"

"Garrick," he said, "is accused of vanity; but few men would have borne such unremitting prosperity with greater, if with equal, moderation. He is accused, too, of avarice, though he lives rather like a prince than an actor. But the frugality he practised when he first appeared in the world, has put a stamp upon his character ever since. And now, though his table, his equipage, and his establishment, are equal to those of persons of the most splendid rank, the original stain of avarice still blots his name. And yet, had not his early, and perhaps necessary economy, fixed upon him the charge of thrift, he would long since have been reproached with that of luxury."

Another time he said of him, "Garrick never enters a room, but he regards himself as the object of general attention, from whom the entertainment of the company is expected. And true it is, that he seldom disappoints that expectation: for he has infinite humour, a very just proportion of wit, and more convivial pleasantry than almost any man living. But then, off as well as on the stage, he is always an actor; for he holds it so incumbent upon him to be sportive, that his gaiety, from being habitual, is become mechanical: and he can exert his spirits at all times alike, without any consultation of his disposition to hilarity."

422. *Streatham.—"Evelina."*

Dr. Johnson, however undesignedly, was the cause of the new author's invitation to Streatham, from being the first person who there had pronounced the name of "Evelina;" and that previously to the discovery that its unknown writer was the daughter of a man whose early enthusiasm for Dr. Johnson had merited his warm acknowledgments. The curiosity of the Doctor, however, though certainly excited, was by no means so

powerful as to allure him from his chamber one moment before his customary time of descending to dinner; and the new author had three or four hours to pass in constantly augmenting trepidation: for the prospect of seeing him, which so short a time before would have sufficed for her delight, was now chequered by the consciousness that she could not, as heretofore, be in his presence only for her own gratification, without any reciprocity of notice.

The morning was passed in the library, and to Doctor Burney and his daughter was passed deliciously: Mrs. Thrale, much amused by the presence of two persons so peculiarly situated, put forth her utmost powers of pleasing. "I wish you had been with us last night, Dr. Burney," she said; "for thinking of what would happen to-day, we could talk of nothing in the world but a certain sweet book; and Dr. Johnson was so full of it, that he quite astonished us. He has got those incomparable Brangtons quite by heart, and he recited scene after scene of their squabbles, and selfishness, and forwardness, till he quite shook his sides with laughter. But his greatest favourite is the Holborn beau, as he calls Mr. Smith. Such a fine varnish, he says, of low politeness! such struggles to appear the fine gentleman! such a determination to be genteel! and, above all, such profound devotion to the ladies,—while openly declaring his distaste to matrimony! All this Mr. Johnson pointed out with so much comicality of sport, that, at last, he got into such high spirits, that he set about personating Mr. Smith himself. We all thought we must have died no other death than that of suffocation, in seeing Dr. Johnson handing about any thing he could catch, or snatch at, and making smirking bows, saying he was *all for the ladies,—every thing that was agreeable to the ladies*, &c. &c., "except," says he, "going to church with them: and as to, that, though marriage, to be sure, is all in all to the ladies

marriage to a man — is the devil!" And then he pursued his personifications of his Holborn beau, till he brought him to what Mr. Johnson calls his climax, which is his meeting with Sir Clement Willoughby at Madame Duval's, where a blow is given at once to his self-sufficiency, by the surprise and confusion of seeing himself so distanced; and the hopeless envy with which he looks up to Sir Clement, as to a meteor such as he himself had hitherto been looked up to at Snow Hill, that give a finishing touch to his portrait. And all this comic humour of character he says, owes its effect to contrast; for without Lord Orville, and Mr. Villars, and that melancholy and gentleman-like half-starved Scotchman, poor Macartney, the Brangtons, and the Duvals, would be less than nothing; for vulgarity, in its own unshadowed glare, is only disgusting."

423. *Introduction to Johnson.*

When at last we were summoned to dinner, Mrs. Thrale made my father and myself sit on each side of her. I said, I hoped I did not take the place of Dr. Johnson: for, to my great consternation, he did not even yet appear, and I began to apprehend he meant to abscond. "No," answered Mrs. Thrale; "he will sit next to you, — and that, I am sure, will give him great pleasure."

Soon after we were all marshalled, the great man entered. Mrs. Thrale introduced me to him with an emphasis upon my name that rather frightened me, for it seemed like a call for some compliment. But he made me a bow the most formal, almost solemn, in utter silence, and with his eyes bent downwards. I felt relieved by this distance, for I thought he had forgotten, for the present at least, both the favoured little book and the invited little scribbler; and I therefore began to answer the perpetual addresses to me of Mrs. Thrale

with rather more ease. But by the time I was thus recovered from my panic, Dr. Johnson asked my father what was the composition of some little pies on his side of the table; and, while my father was endeavouring to make it out, Mrs. Thrale said, "Nothing but mutton, Mr. Johnson, so I don't ask you to eat such poor patties, because I know you despise them."

"No, Madam, no!" cried Dr. Johnson, "I despise nothing that is good of its sort. But I am too proud now [smiling] to eat mutton pies. Sitting by Miss Burney makes me very proud to-day!" "Miss Burney," cried Mrs. Thrale, laughing, "you must take great care of your heart, if Mr. Johnson attacks it; for I assure you he is not often successless!" "What's that you say, Madam?" cried the Doctor; "are you making mischief between the young lady and me already?"

A little while afterwards, he drank Miss Thrale's health and mine together, in a bumper of lemonade; and then added, "It is a terrible thing that we cannot wish young ladies to be well, without wishing them to become old women!" "If the pleasures of longevity were not gradual," said my father, "if we were to light upon them by a jump or a skip, we should be cruelly at a loss how to give them welcome." "But some people,' said Mr. Seward, "are young and old at the same time; for they wear so well, that they never look old." "No, Sir, no!" cried the Doctor; "that never yet was, and never will be. You might as well say they were at the same time tall and short. Though I recollect an epitaph — I forget upon whom — to that purpose: —

> "Miss such a one — lies buried here,
> So early wise, and lasting fair,
> That none, unless her years you told,
> Thought her a child — or thought her old."

My father then mentioned Mr. Garrick's epilogue to "Bonduca," which Dr. Johnson called a miserable performance; and which every body agreed to be the worst that Mr. Garrick had ever written. "And yet," said Mr. Seward, "it has been very much admired. But it is in praise of English valour, and so, I suppose, the subject made it popular." "I do not know, Sir," said Dr. Johnson, "any thing about the subject, for I could not read till I came to any. I got through about half a dozen lines; but for subject, I could observe no other than perpetual dulness. I do not know what is the matter with David. I am afraid he is becoming superannuated; for his prologues and epilogues used to be incomparable."

"Nothing is so fatiguing," said Mrs. Thrale, "as the life of a wit. Garrick and Wilkes are the oldest men of their age that I know; for they have both worn themselves out prematurely by being eternally on the rack to entertain others." "David, Madam," said the Doctor, "looks much older than he is, because his face has had double the business of any other man's. It is never at rest. When he speaks one minute, he has quite a different countenance to that which he assumes the next. I do not believe he ever kept the same look for half an hour together in the whole course of his life. And such a perpetual play of the muscles must certainly wear a man's face out before his time."

While I was cordially laughing at this idea, the Doctor, who had probably observed in me some little uneasy trepidation, and now, I suppose, concluded me restored to my usual state, suddenly, though very ceremoniously, as if to begin some acquaintance with me, requested that I would help him to some brocoli. This I did; but when he took it, he put on a face of humorous discontent, and said, "Only *this*, Madam? You would not have helped Mr Macartney so parsimoniously!"

He affected to utter this in a whisper; but to see him directly address me, caught the attention of all the table, and every one smiled, though in silence; while I felt so surprised and so foolish, so pleased and so ashamed, that I hardly knew whether he meant *my* Mr. Macartney, or spoke at random of some other. This, however, he soon put beyond all doubt, by very composedly adding, while contemptuously regarding my imputed parsimony on his plate: "Mr. Macartney, it is true, might have most claim to liberality, poor fellow! for how, as Tom Brangton shrewdly remarks, should he ever have known what a good dinner was, if he had never come to England?" Perceiving, I suppose—for it could not be very difficult to discern—the commotion into which this explication put me; and the stifled disposition to a contagious laugh, which was suppressed, not to add to my embarrassment; he quickly, but quietly, went on to a general discourse upon Scotland, descriptive and political.

From Scotland, the talk fell, but I cannot tell how, upon some friend of Dr. Johnson's, of whom I did not catch the name; so I will call him Mr. Three Stars, * * *; of whom Mr. Seward related some burlesque anecdotes, from which Mr. * * * was warmly vindicated by the Doctor. "Better say no more, Mr. Seward," cried Mrs. Thrale, "for Mr. * * * is one of the persons that Mr. Johnson will suffer no one to abuse but himself. Garrick is another: for if any creature but himself says a word against Garrick, Mr. Johnson will brow-beat him in a moment." "Why, Madam, as to David," answered the Doctor, very calmly, "it is only because they do not know when to abuse and when to praise him; and I will allow no man to speak any ill of David, that he does not deserve. As to * * *, — why really I believe him to be an honest man, too, at the bottom: but, to be sure, he is rather penurious; and he is somewhat mean; and it must be owned he has

some degree of brutality; and is not without a tendency to savageness, that cannot well be defended."

We all laughed, as he could not help doing himself, at such a curious mode of taking up his friend's justification. And he then related a trait of another friend who had belonged to some club (1) that the Doctor frequented, who, after the first or second night of his admission, desired, as he eat no supper, to be excused paying his share for the collation. "And was he excused, Sir?" cried my *father*. "Yes, Sir; and very readily. No man is angry with another for being inferior to himself. We all admitted his plea publicly — for the gratification of scorning him privately! For my own part, I was fool enough to constantly pay my share for the wine, which I never tasted. But my poor friend Sir John, it cannot well be denied, was but an unclubbable man." How delighted was I to hear this master of languages, this awful, this dreaded Lexiphanes, thus sportively and gaily coin burlesque words in social comicality!

I don't know whether he deigned to watch me, but I caught a glance of his eye that seemed to show pleasure in perceiving my surprise and diversion; for with increased glee of manner he proceeded: — "This reminds me of a gentleman and lady with whom I once travelled. I suppose I must call them gentleman and lady, according to form, because they travelled in their own coach and four horses. But, at the first inn where we stopped to water the cattle, the lady called to a waiter for — a pint of ale! And, when it came, she would not taste it, till she had wrangled with the man for not bringing her fuller measure. Now, Madame Duval could not have done a grosser thing!"

A sympathetic simper now ran from mouth to mouth,

(1) At the date of this letter, I knew not that the club to which Dr. Johnson alluded was that which was denominated his own, — or The Literary Club

save to mine, and to that of Dr. Johnson; who gravely pretended to pass off what he had said as if it were a merely accidental reminiscence of some vulgar old acquaintance of his own. And this, as undoubtedly, and most kindly, he projected, prevented any sort of answer that might have made the book a subject of general discourse. And presently afterwards, he started some other topic, which he addressed chiefly to Mr. Thrale. But if you expect me to tell you what it was, you think far more grandly of my powers of attention without, when all within is in a whirl, than I deserve.

Be it, however, what it might, the next time there was a pause, we all observed a sudden play of the muscles in the countenance of the Doctor, that showed him to be secretly enjoying some ludicrous idea: and accordingly, a minute or two after, he pursed up his mouth, and, in an assumed pert, yet feminine accent, while he tossed up his head to express wonder, he affectedly minced out, "La, Polly! — only think! Miss has danced with a Lord!" This was resistless to the whole set, and a general, though a gentle laugh, became now infectious; in which, I must needs own to you, I could not, with all my embarrassment, and all my shame, and all my unwillingness to demonstrate my consciousness, help being caught — so indescribably ludicrous and unexpected was a mimicry of Miss Biddy Brangton from Dr. Johnson! The Doctor, however, with a refinement of delicacy of which I have the deepest sense, never once cast his eyes my way during these comic traits; though those of every body else in the company had scarcely for a moment any other direction.

But imagine my relief and my pleasure, in playfulness such as this from the great literary Leviathan, whom I had dreaded almost as much as I had honoured! How far was I from dreaming of such sportive condescension! He clearly wished to draw the little snail from her cell, and, when once she was out, not to frighten

her back. He seems to understand my *queeralities* — as some one has called my not liking to be set up for a sign-post — with more leniency than any body else."

424. *Lives of the Poets.*

While that charming work, "The Lives of the Poets," was in its progress, when only the Thrale family and its nearly adopted guests, the two Burneys, were assembled, Dr. Johnson would frequently produce one of its proof sheets to embellish the breakfast table, which was always in the library; and was, certainly the most sprightly and agreeable meeting of the day; for then, as no strangers were present to stimulate exertion, or provoke rivalry, argument was not urged on by the mere spirit of victory; it was instigated only by such truisms as could best bring forth that conflict of *pros* and *cons* which elucidates opposing opinions. Wit was not flashed with the keen sting of satire; yet it elicited not less gaiety from sparkling with an unwounding brilliancy, which brightened, without inflaming, every eye, and charmed, without tingling, every ear.

These proof sheets Mrs. Thrale was permitted to read aloud; and the discussions to which they led were in the highest degree entertaining. Dr. Burney wistfully[1] desired to possess one of them; but left to his daughter the risk of the petition. A hint, however, proved sufficient, and was understood not alone with compliance, but vivacity. Boswell, Dr. Johnson said, had engaged Frank Barber, his negro servant, to collect and preserve all the proof sheets; but though it had not been without the knowledge, it was without the order or the interference of their author: to the present solicitor, therefore, willingly and without scruple, he now offered an entire life; adding, with a benignant smile, "Choose your poet!"

Without scruple, also, was the acceptance; and,

without hesitation, the choice was Pope. And that not merely because, next to Shakspeare himself, Pope draws human characters the most veridically, perhaps, of any poetic delineator; but for yet another reason. Dr. Johnson composed with so ready an accuracy, that he sent his copy to the press unread; reserving all his corrections for the proof sheets: and, consequently, as not even Dr. Johnson could read twice without ameliorating some passages, his proof sheets were at times liberally marked with changes; and, as the Museum copy of Pope's Translation of the Iliad, from which Dr. Johnson has given many examples, contains abundant emendations by Pope, I secured at once, on the same page, the marginal alterations and second thoughts of that great author, and of his great biographer.

When the book was published, Dr. Johnson brought to Streatham a complete set, handsomely bound, of the Works of the Poets, as well as his own Prefaces, to present to Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. And then, telling me that to the King, and to the chiefs of Streatham alone he could offer so large a tribute, he most kindly placed before me a bound copy of his own part of the work; in the title-page of which he gratified my earnest request by writing my name, and "From the Author."

After which, at my particular solicitation, he gave me a small engraving of his portrait from the picture of Sir Joshua Reynolds. And while, some time afterwards, I was examining it at a distant table, Dr. Johnson, in passing across the room, stopped to discover by what I was occupied; which he no sooner discerned, than he began see-sawing for a moment or two in silence; and then, with a ludicrous half laugh, peeping over my shoulder, he called out: "Ah ha! — Sam Johnson! — I see thee! — and an ugly dog thou art!"

He even extended his kindness to a remembrance of Mr. Bewley, the receiver and preserver of the wisp of

a Bolt Court hearth broom, as a relic of the Author of the Rambler; which anecdote Dr. Burney had ventured to confess; and Dr. Johnson now, with his compliments, sent a set of the Prefaces to St. Martin's Street, directed, "*For the Broom Gentleman:*" which Mr. Bewley received with rapturous gratitude.

425. *Boswell at full Length.*

When next Dr. Burney took me back to Streatham, he found there, recently arrived from Scotland, Mr. Boswell; whose sprightly Corsican tour, and heroic, almost Quixotic, pursuit of General Paoli, joined to the tour to the Hebrides with Dr. Johnson, made him an object himself of considerable attention.

He spoke the Scotch accent strongly, though by no means so as to affect, even slightly, his intelligibility to an English ear. He had an odd mock solemnity of tone and manner, that he had acquired imperceptibly from constantly thinking of and imitating Dr. Johnson, whose own solemnity, nevertheless, far from mock, was the result of pensive rumination. There was, also, something slouching in the gait and dress of Mr. Boswell, that wore an air, ridiculously enough, of purporting to personify the same model. His clothes were always too large for him; his hair, or wig, was constantly in a state of negligence; and he never for a moment sat still or upright upon a chair. Every look and movement displayed either intentional or involuntary imitation. Yet certainly it was not meant as caricature; for his heart, almost even to idolatry, was in his reverence of Dr. Johnson.

Dr. Burney was often surprised that this kind of farcical similitude escaped the notice of the Doctor; but attributed his missing it to a high superiority over any such suspicion, as much as to his near-sightedness; for fully was Dr. Burney persuaded, that had any detection of such imitation taken place, Dr. Johnson

who generally treated Mr. Boswell as a school-boy whom, without the smallest ceremony, he pardoned or rebuked, alternately, would so indignantly have been provoked, as to have instantaneously inflicted upon him some mark of his displeasure. And equally he was persuaded that Mr. Boswell, however shocked and even inflamed in receiving it, would soon, from his deep veneration, have thought it justly incurred; and, after a day or two of pouting and sullenness, would have compromised the matter by one of his customary simple apologies, of "Pray, Sir, forgive me!"

Dr. Johnson, though often irritated by the officious importunity of Mr. Boswell, was really touched by his attachment. It was indeed surprising, and even affecting, to remark the pleasure with which this great man accepted personal kindness, even from the simplest of mankind; and the grave formality with which he acknowledged it even to the meanest. Possibly it was what he most prized, because what he could least command; for personal partiality hangs upon lighter and slighter qualities than those which earn solid approbation: but of this, if he had least command, he had also least want; his towering superiority of intellect elevating him above all competitors, and regularly establishing him, wherever he appeared, as the first being of the society.

As Mr. Boswell was at Streatham only upon a morning visit, a collation was ordered, to which all were assembled. Mr. Boswell was preparing to take a seat that he seemed, by prescription, to consider as his own, next to Dr. Johnson; but Mr. Seward, who was present, waived his hand for Mr. Boswell to move further on, saying, with a smile, "Mr. Boswell, that seat is Miss Burney's."

He stared, amazed: the asserted claimant was new and unknown to him, and he appeared by no means

pleased to resign his prior rights. But, after looking round for a minute or two, with an important air of demanding the meaning of this innovation, and receiving no satisfaction, he reluctantly, almost resentfully, got another chair, and placed it at the back of the shoulder of Dr. Johnson; while this new and unheard of rival quietly seated herself as if not hearing what was passing; for she shrunk from the explanation that she feared might ensue, as she saw a smile stealing over every countenance, that of Dr. Johnson himself not excepted, at the discomfiture and surprise of Mr. Boswell.

Mr. Boswell, however, was so situated as not to remark it in the Doctor; and of every one else, when in that presence, he was unobservant, if not contemptuous. In truth, when he met with Dr. Johnson, he commonly forbore even answering any thing that was said, or attending to any thing that went forward, lest he should miss the smallest sound from that voice to which he paid such exclusive, though merited, homage. But the moment that voice burst forth, the attention which it excited in Mr. Boswell amounted almost to pain. His eyes goggled with eagerness; he leant his ear almost on the shoulder of the Doctor; and his mouth dropped open to catch every syllable that might be uttered: nay, he seemed not only to dread losing a word, but to be anxious not to miss a breathing; as if hoping from it, latently, or mystically, some information.

But when, in a few minutes, Dr. Johnson, whose eye did not follow him, and who had concluded him to be at the other end of the table, said something gaily and good-humouredly, by the appellation of Bozzy; and discovered, by the sound of the reply, that Bozzy had planted himself, as closely as he could, behind and between the elbows of the new usurper and his own, the Doctor turned angrily round upon him, and, clapping

his hand rather loudly upon his knee, said in a tone of displeasure, "What do you do there, Sir? — Go to the table, Sir!"

Mr. Boswell instantly, and with an air of affright, obeyed: and there was something so unusual in such humble submission to so imperious a command, that another smile gleamed its way across every mouth, except that of the Doctor and of Mr. Boswell; who now, very unwillingly, took a distant seat.

But, ever restless when not at the side of Dr. Johnson, he presently recollected something that he wished to exhibit, and, hastily rising, was running away in its search; when the Doctor, calling after him, authoritatively said: "What are you thinking of, Sir? Why do you get up before the cloth is removed? Come back to your place, Sir!"

Again, and with equal obsequiousness, Mr. Boswell did as he was bid; when the Doctor, pursing his lips, not to betray rising risibility, muttered half to himself: "Running about in the middle of meals! One would take you for a Brangton! —" "A Brangton, Sir?" repeated Mr. Boswell, with earnestness; "What is a Brangton, Sir?" "Where have you lived, Sir," cried the Doctor, laughing, "and what company have you kept, not to know that?"

Mr. Boswell now, doubly curious, yet always apprehensive of falling into some disgrace with Dr. Johnson, said, in a low tone, which he knew the Doctor could not hear, to Mrs. Thrale: "Pray, Ma'am, what's a Brangton? — Do me the favour to tell me? — Is it some animal hereabouts?" Mrs. Thrale only heartily laughed, but without answering: as she saw one of her guests uneasily fearful of an explanation. But Mr. Seward cried, "I'll tell you, Boswell — I'll tell you! — if you will walk with me into the paddock: only let us wait till the table is cleared; or I shall be taken for a Brangton, too!" They soon went off together; and Mr.

Boswell, no doubt, was fully informed of the road that had led to the usurpation by which he had thus been annoyed. But the Branghton fabricator took care to mount to her chamber ere they returned; and did not come down till Mr. Boswell was gone.

426. *Dr. Johnson's last Illness.*

On Dr. Johnson's return from Lichfield, in November 1784, my father hastened to Bolt Court,* but had the grief to find his honoured friend much weakened, and in great pain; though cheerful, and struggling to revive. All of Dr. Burney's family, who had had the honour of admission, hastened to him also; but chiefly his second daughter, who chiefly and peculiarly was always demanded. She was received with his wonted, his never-failing partiality; and, as well as the Doctor, repeated her visits by every opportunity during the ensuing short three weeks of his earthly existence. She will here copy, from the diary she sent to Boulogne, an account of what, eventually, though unsuspectedly, proved to be her last interview with this venerated friend: —

Nov. 25. 1784. — Our dear father lent me the carriage this morning for Bolt Court. You will easily conceive how gladly I seized the opportunity for making a longer visit than usual to my revered Dr. Johnson, whose health, since his return from Lichfield, has been deplorably deteriorated. He was alone, and I had a more satisfactory and entertaining conversation with him than I have had for many months past. He was in better spirits, too, than I have seen him, except upon our first meeting, since he came back to Bolt Court. He owned, nevertheless, that his nights were grievously restless and painful; and told me that he was going, by medical advice, to try what sleeping out of town might do for him. And then, with a smile,

but a smile of more sadness than mirth! he added, "I remember that my wife, when she was near her end, poor woman! was also advised to sleep out of town: and when she was carried to the lodging that had been prepared for her, she complained that the staircase was in very bad condition; for the plaster was beaten off the walls in many places. "Oh!" said the man of the house, "that's nothing; it's only the knocks against it of the coffins of the poor souls that have died in the lodging." He forced a faint laugh at the man's brutal honesty; but it was a laugh of ill-disguised, though checked, secret anguish.

I felt inexpressibly shocked, both by the perspective and retrospective view of this relation; but, desirous to confine my words to the literal story, I only exclaimed against the man's unfeeling *absurdity* in making so unnecessary a confession. "True!" he cried; "such a confession, to a person then mounting his stairs for the recovery of her health, or, rather, for the preservation of her life, contains, indeed, more absurdity than we can well lay our account to."

We talked then of poor Mrs. Thrale, but only for a moment; for I saw him so greatly moved, and with such severity of displeasure, that I hastened to start another subject; and he solemnly enjoined me to mention that no more.

I gave him concisely the history of the Bristol milk-woman, who is at present zealously patronised by the benevolent Hannah More. I expressed my surprise at the reports generally in circulation, that the first authors that the milk-woman read, if not the only ones, were Milton and Young. "I find it difficult," I added, "to conceive how Milton and Young could be the first authors with any reader. Could a child understand them? And grown persons, who have never read, are, in literature, children still."

"Doubtless," he answered. "But there is nothing so little comprehended as what is genius. They give it to all, when it can be but a part. The milk-woman had surely begun with some ballad — "Chevy Chase," or the "Children in the Wood." Genius is, in fact, *knowing the use of tools*. But there must be tools, or how use them? A man who has spent all his life in this room, will give a very poor account of what is contained in the next." "Certainly, Sir; and yet there is such a thing as invention? Shakspeare could never have seen a Caliban?"

"No; but he had seen a man, and knew how to vary him to a monster. A person who would draw a monstrous cow, must know first what a cow is commonly; or how can he tell that to give her an ass's head, or an elephant's tusk, will make her monstrous? Suppose you show me a man who is a very expert carpenter, and that an admiring stander-by, looking at some of his works, exclaims: 'O! he was born a carpenter!' What would have become of that birthright if he had never seen any wood?"

Presently, dwelling on this idea, he went on, "Let two men, one with genius, the other with none, look together at an overturned waggon; he who has no genius will think of the waggon only as he then sees it; that is to say, overturned, and walk on: he who has genius will give it a glance of examination, that will paint it to his imagination such as it was previously to its being overturned, and when it was standing still, and when it was in motion, and when it was heavy loaded, and when it was empty; but both alike must see the waggon to think of it at all."

The pleasure with which I listened to his illustration now animated him on; and he talked upon this milk-woman, and upon a once as famous shoemaker; and then mounted his spirits and his subject to our immortal Shakspeare; flowing and glowing on, with as much wit

and truth of criticism and judgment, as ever yet I have heard him display; but, alack-a-day! my Susan, I have no power to give you the participation so justly your due. My paper is filling; and I have no franks for doubling letters across the channel! But delightfully bright are his faculties, though the poor, infirm, shaken machine that contains them seems alarmingly giving way! And soon, exhilarated as he became by the pleasure of bestowing pleasure, I saw a palpable increase of suffering in the midst of his sallies; I offered, therefore, to go into the next room, there to wait for the carriage; an offer which, for the first time, he did not oppose; but taking, and most affectionately pressing, both my hands, "Be not," he said, in a voice of even melting kindness and concern, "be not longer in coming again for my letting you go now!" I eagerly assured him I would come the sooner, and was running off; but he called me back, and in a solemn voice, and a manner the most energetic, said: "Remember me in your prayers!"

How affecting such an injunction from Dr. Johnson! It almost — as once before — made me tremble, from surprise and emotion — surprise he could so honour me, and emotion that he should think himself so ill. I longed to ask him so to remember *me!* but he was too serious for any parleying, and I knew him too well for offering any disqualifying speeches: I merely, in a low voice, and I am sure, a troubled accent, uttered an instant and heartfelt assurance of obedience; and then, very heavily indeed in spirits, I left him.

From this meeting I felt redoubled anxiety, both for the health and the sight of this illustrious invalid. But all accounts thenceforward discouraged my return to him; his pains daily becoming greater, and his weakness more oppressive; added to which obstacles, he was now constantly attended by a group of male friends. I was soon afterwards engaged on a visit to Norbury

Park; but immediately upon my return to town, presented myself, according to my willing promise, at Bolt Court. Frank Barber, the faithful negro, told me, with great sorrow, that his master was very bad indeed, though he did not keep his bed. The poor man would have shown me up stairs. This I declined, desiring only that he would let the Doctor know that I had called to pay my respects to him, but would by no means disturb him, if he were not well enough to see me without inconvenience.

Mr. Strahan, the clergyman, was with him, Frank said, alone; and Mr. Strahan, in a few minutes, descended. Dr. Johnson, he told me, was very ill indeed, but much obliged to me for coming to him; and he had sent Mr. Strahan to thank me in his name; but to say that he was so very weak, that he hoped I would excuse his not seeing me.

I was greatly disappointed; but, leaving a message of the most affectionate respect, acquiesced, and drove away; painfully certain how extremely ill, or how sorrowfully low he must be, to decline the sight of one whom so constantly, so partially, he had pressed, nay, adjured, "to come to him again and again." Fast, however, was approaching the time when he could so adjure me no more! From my firm conviction of his almost boundless kindness to me, I was fearful now to importune or distress him, and forbore, for the moment, repeating my visits; leaving in Dr. Burney's hands all propositions for their renewal.

On Friday, the 10th of December, Mr. Seward brought to my father the alarming intelligence from Frank Barber, that Dr. Warren had seen his master, and told him that he might take what opium he pleased for the alleviation of his pains. Dr. Johnson instantly understood, and impressively thanked him, and then gravely took a last leave of him; after which, with the

utmost kindness, as well as composure, he formally bid adieu to all his physicians.

Dr. Burney, in much affliction, hurried to Bolt Court; but the invalid seemed to be sleeping, and could not be spoken to till he should open his eyes. Mr. Strahan, the clergyman, gave, however, the welcome information, that the terror of death had now passed away; and that this excellent man no longer looked forward with dismay to his quick-approaching end; but, on the contrary, with what he himself called the irradiation of hope.

This was, indeed, the greatest of consolations, at so awful a crisis, to his grieving friend; nevertheless, Dr. Burney was deeply depressed at the heavy and irreparable loss he was so soon to sustain; but he determined to make, at least, one more effort for a parting sight of his so long-honoured friend. And, on Saturday, the 11th December, to his unspeakable comfort, he arrived at Bolt Court just as the poor invalid was able to be visible; and he was immediately admitted.

Dr. Burney found him seated on a great chair, propped up by pillows, and perfectly tranquil. He affectionately took my father's hand, and kindly inquired after his health, and that of his family; and then, as evermore Dr. Johnson was wont to do, he separately and very particularly named and dwelt upon his second daughter; gently adding, "I hope Fanny did not take it amiss, that I did not see her that morning? — I was very bad indeed!" Dr. Burney answered, that the word *amiss* could never be à propos to her; and least of all now, when he was so very ill.

My father ventured to stay about half an hour, which was partly spent in quiet discourse, partly in calm silence; the invalid always perfectly placid in looks and manner. When he was retiring, Dr. Johnson again took his hand and encouraged him to call yet another time; and afterwards, when again he was departing,

Dr. Johnson impressively said, though in a low voice "Tell Fanny to pray for me!" And then, still holding, or rather grasping, his hand, he made a prayer for himself, the most pious, humble, eloquent, and touching, Dr. Burney said, that mortal man could compose and utter. He concluded it with an amen! in which Dr. Burney fervently joined; and which was spontaneously echoed by all who were present.

This over, he brightened up, as if with revived spirits, and opened cheerfully into some general conversation; and when Dr. Burney, yet a third time, was taking his reluctant leave, something of his old arch look played upon his countenance as, smilingly, he said, "Tell Fanny, I think I shall yet throw the ball at her again!" A kindness so lively, following an injunction so penetrating, reanimated a hope of my admission; and, after church, on the ensuing morning, Sunday, the 12th of December, with the fullest approbation of Dr. Burney, I repaired once more to Bolt Court. But grievously was I overset on hearing, at the door, that the Doctor was worse, and could receive no one. I summoned Frank Barber, and told him I had understood, from my father, that Dr. Johnson had meant to see me. Frank then, but in silence, conducted me to the parlour. I begged him merely to mention to the Doctor, that I had called with most earnest inquiries; but not to hint at any expectation of seeing him till he should be better.

Frank went up stairs; but did not return. A full hour was consumed in anxious waiting. I then saw Mr. Langton pass the parlour door, which I watchfully kept open, and ascend the stairs. I had not courage to stop or speak to him, and another hour lingered on in the same suspense.

But, at about four o'clock, Mr. Langton made his appearance in the parlour. I took it for granted he came accidentally, but observed that, though he bowed

he forbore to speak, or even to look at me, and seemed in much disturbance. Extremely alarmed, I durst not venture at any question; But Mrs. Davis, who was there, uneasily asked, "How is Dr. Johnson now, Sir?" "Going on to death very fast!" was the mournful reply. Grievously shocked and overset by so hopeless a sentence, after an invitation so sprightly of only the preceding evening from the dying man himself, I turned to the window to recover from so painful a disappointment. "Has he taken any thing, Sir?" said Mrs. Davis. "Nothing at all! We carried him some bread and milk: he refused it, and said, 'The less the better!'" Mrs. Davis then asked sundry other questions, from the answers to which it fully appeared that his faculties were perfect, and that his mind was quite composed.

This conversation lasted about a quarter of an hour, before I had any suspicion that Mr. Langton had entered the parlour purposely to speak to me, and with a message from Dr. Johnson; but as soon as I could summon sufficient firmness to turn round, Mr. Langton, solemnly said, "The Doctor is very sorry indeed not to see you; but he desired me to come and speak to you for him myself, and to tell you, that he hopes you will excuse him; for he feels himself too weak for such an interview." Touched to the very heart by so kind, though sorrowful a message, at a moment that seemed so awful, I hastily expressed something like thanks to Mr. Langton, who was visibly affected; and, leaving my most affectionate respects, with every warmly kind wish I could half utter, I hurried back to my father's coach. The very next day, Monday, the 13th of December, Dr. Johnson expired, and without a groan. Expired, it is thought, in his sleep.

PART XVII.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON, BY DR. BEATTIE (1)

427. *Johnson's "Journey."*

JOHNSON'S "Journey to the Hebrides" contains many things worthy of the author, and is, on the whole, very entertaining. His account of the isles is, I dare say, very just: I never was there, and therefore can say nothing of them, from my own knowledge. His account of *some* facts, relating to other parts of Scotland, are not unexceptionable: either he must have been misinformed, or he must have misunderstood his informer, in regard to several of his remarks on the improvement of the country. I am surprised at one of his mistakes, which leads him once or twice into perplexity and false conjecture: he seems not to have known, that, in the common language of Scotland, *Irish* and *Erse* are both used to denote the speech of the Scots Highlanders; and are as much synonymous (at least, in many parts of the kingdom) as *Scotch* and *Scottish*. *Irish* is generally thought the genteeler appellation; and *Erse*, the vulgar and colloquial. His remarks on the *trees* of Scotland must greatly surprise a native. In some of our provinces trees cannot be reared by any mode of cultivation we have yet discovered. In *some*, where trees flourish extremely well, they are not *much* cultivated, because they are not necessary; but in others, we have store of wood, and forests of great extent, and of great antiquity. I admire Johnson's genius; I esteem him for his virtues; I shall ever cherish a grateful remembrance

(1) [From Sir William Forbes's Life of Dr. Beattie.]

of the civilities I have received from him: I have often, in this country, exerted myself in defence both of his character and writings; but there are in this book several things which I cannot defend.

428. *Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. — Goldsmith.*

I was introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Thrale by Dr. Johnson, and received many and great civilities from both. Mr. Thrale was a most respectable character; intelligent, modest, communicative, and friendly; and I greatly admired his wife for her vivacity, learning, affability, and beauty: I thought her, indeed, one of the most agreeable women I ever saw; and could not have imagined her capable of acting so unwise a part as she afterwards did. What she says of Goldsmith is perfectly true. He was a poor fretful creature, eaten up with affectation and envy. He was the only person I ever knew who acknowledged himself to be envious. In Johnson's presence he was quiet enough; but in his absence expressed great uneasiness on hearing him praised.

429. *Mrs. Montagu.*

Johnson's harsh censure of Mrs. Montagu's Essay on Shakspeare does not surprise me; for I have heard him speak contemptuously of it. It is, for all that, one of the best, the most original, and most elegant pieces of criticism in our language, or in any other. Johnson had many of the talents of a critic; but his want of temper, his violent prejudices, and something, I am afraid, of an envious turn of mind, made him often an unfair one. Mrs. Montagu was very kind to him; but Mrs. Montagu has more wit than any body; and Johnson could not bear that any person should be thought to have wit but himself. Even Lord Chesterfield, and, what is more strange, even Mr. Burke, he would not allow to have wit. He preferred Smollett to Fielding: He would not grant that Armstrong's poem of "Health,"

or the tragedy of "Douglas," had any merit. He told me, that he never read Milton through, till he was obliged to do it, in order to gather words for his Dictionary. He spoke very peevishly of the "Masque of Comus;" and when I urged, that there was a great deal of exquisite poetry in it, "Yes," said he, "but it is like gold hid under a rock;" to which I made no reply; for indeed I did not well understand it.

430. *Johnson in* 1781.

Johnson grows in grace as he grows in years. He not only has better health and a fresher complexion than ever he had before (at least since I knew him), but he has contracted a gentleness of manners which pleases every body. Some ascribe this to the good company to which he has of late been more accustomed than in the early part of his life. There may be something in this; but *I* am apt to think the good health he has enjoyed for a long time is the chief cause. Mr. Thrale appointed him one of his executors, and left him two hundred pounds; every body says, he should have left him two hundred a year; which, from a fortune like his, would have been a very inconsiderable reduction.

431. *Lives of the Poets.*

I have been reading Johnson's Prefaces to the English edition of the Poets. There are many excellent things in them, particularly in the Lives of Milton, Dryden, and Waller. He is more civil to Milton than I expected, though he hates him for his blank verse and his politics. To the forced and unnatural conceits of Cowley, I think he is too favourable; and I heartily wish, that, instead of the poems of this poet, he had given us "The Faerie Queen" of Spenser, which is left out very absurdly.

432. *Milton.*

Johnson hated Milton from his heart; and he wished to be himself considered as a good Latin poet, which, however, he never was, as may be seen by his translation of Pope's "Messiah."

433. *Boswell's "Tour."*

I have just gone through Boswell's book. He is very good to me, as Dr. Johnson always was; and I am very grateful to both: but I cannot approve the plan of such a work. To publish a man's letters, or his conversation, without his consent, is not, in my opinion, quite fair: for how many things, in the hour of relaxation, or in friendly correspondence, does a man throw out, which he would never wish to hear of again; and what a restraint would it be on all social intercourse, if one were to suppose that every word one utters would be entered in a register! Mr. Boswell indeed says, that there are few men who need be under any apprehension of that sort. This is true; and the argument he founds on it would be good, if he had published nothing but what Dr. Johnson and he said and did; for Johnson, it seems, knew that the publication would be made, and did not object to it: but Mr. Boswell has published the sayings and doings of other people, who never consented to any such thing; and who little thought, when they were doing their best to entertain and amuse the two travellers, that a story would be made of it, and laid before the public. I approve of the Greek proverb, that says, "I hate a bottle companion with a memory." If my friend, after eating a bit of mutton with me, should go to the coffee-house, and there give an account of every thing that had passed, I believe I should not take it well.

Part XVIII.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON, BY THE RT. HON. W. WINDHAM (1)

[To the kindness of Thomas Amyot, Esq F R.S, the Editor is indebted for the following Memoranda, extracted from Mr Windham's Diary for 1784, of the Conversations he had with Dr Johnson during his visit at Ashbourne, where he arrived on the 30th of August, "leaving it," as he states, "with regret, at half-past one on the 1st of September "]

434. *Homer.*

"The source of every thing, either in or out of nature, that can serve the purpose of poetry, is to be found in Homer; — every species of distress, every modification of heroic character, battles, storms, ghosts, incantations, &c."

435. *Odyssey.*

"Dr. Johnson said, he had never read through the Odyssey completely in the original."

436. *Johnson's first Declamation.*

"Anecdote of his first declamation at College, that having neglected to write it till the morning of his being to repeat it, and having only one copy, he got part of it by heart, while he was walking into the Hall,

(1) [In a letter to Dr. Brocklesby, dated September 2., Johnson says — "Windham has been here to see me: he came, I think, forty miles out of his way, and stayed about a day and a half; perhaps I make the time shorter than it was. Such conversation I shall not have again till I come back to the regions of literature; and there Windham is *inter stellas Luna minores.*"]

and the rest he repeated as well as he could extempore." (1)

437. *The Ramei.*

"Anecdote of his tutor, who told them that the Ramei, the followers of Ramus, were so called from *Ramus*, a bow."

438. *Johnson's Idleness.*

"Description of himself as very idle and neglectful of his studies."

439. *Latin.*

"His opinion, that I could not name above five of my college acquaintance who read Latin with ease sufficient to make it pleasurable. The difficulties of the language overpower the desire of reading the author.

"That he read Latin with as much ease when he went to college as at present."

440. *Ovid's Fasti.— Wotton. — Wood.*

"Recommended the reading the Fasti of Ovid,— also Wotton, and Wood on Homer."

441. *Death of Hercules.*

"Commended Ovid's description of the death of Hercules — doubted whether Virgil would not have loaded the description with too many fine words."

442. *Styles.*

"Opinion that there were three ways in which writing might be unnatural; — by being *bombastic* and above nature — *affected* and beside it, fringing events with ornaments which nature did not afford — or *weak* and below nature. That neither of the first would please long. That the third might indeed please a good while, or at least please many; because imbecility,

(1) [See antè, Vol. I. p. 60. — C.]

and consequently a love of imbecility, might be found in many."

443. *A Good Work.*

"Baretti had told him of some Italian author, who said that a good work must be that with which the vulgar were pleased, and of which the learned could tell why it pleased — that it must be able to employ the learned, and detain the idle. Chevy Chase pleased the vulgar, but did not satisfy the learned; it did not fill a mind capable of thinking strongly. The merit of Shakspeare was such as the ignorant could take in, and the learned add nothing to."

444. "*Stat magni nominis,*" *&c.*

"*Stat magni nominis umbra* he would construe as, *umbra quæ est magni nominis*, h. e. *celebrata.*"

445. *Rowe's Lucan.*

"Opinion of Rowe's translation of Lucan, that it would have been improved, if Rowe had had a couple of years to render it less paraphrastical."

446. *Virgil.*

"Vast change of the Latin language from the time of Virgil to Lucretius; — greater than known in any other, even the French. The story of Dido is in Ovid's Fasti, also of Mezentius. Virgil's invention therefore is less than supposed. 'Take from his what is in Homer, what do you leave him?'"

447. *Latin.*

"The pretensions of the English to the reputation of writing Latin is founded not so much on the specimens in that way which they have produced, as on the quantity of talent diffused through the country."

448. *Erasmus.*

"Erasmus appears to be totally ignorant of science and natural knowledge. But one Italian writer is mentioned in Erasmus; whence Johnson conjectured that he did not understand Italian."

449. *Turnpike Roads.*

"Opinion about the effect of turnpike roads. Every place communicating with each other. Before, there were cheap places and dear places. Now all refuges are destroyed for elegant or genteel poverty. Want of such a last hope to support men in their struggle through life, however seldom it might be resorted to. Disunion of families by furnishing a market to each man's abilities, and destroying the dependence of one man on another."

[*The following interesting Account of Mr. Windham's Conversations with Dr. Johnson, a few Days before his Death, is extracted from the same Journal.*]

450. *Johnson's last Illness and Death.*

Tuesday, December 7. 1784.—Ten minutes past 2, P. M.—After waiting some short time in the adjoining room, I was admitted to Dr. Johnson in his bedchamber, where, after placing me next him in the chair (he sitting in his usual place, on the east side of the room, and I on his right hand), he put into my hands two small volumes (an edition of the New Testament, as he afterwards told me), saying, "Extremum hoc munus morientis habeto."

He then proceeded to observe that I was entering upon a life which would lead me deeply into all the business of the world; that he did not condemn civil employment, but that it was a state of great danger, and that he had therefore one piece of advice earnestly

to impress upon me, that I would set apart every seventh day for the care of my soul. That one day the seventh, should be employed in repenting what was amiss in the six preceding, and fortifying my virtue for the six to come. That such a portion of time was surely little enough for the meditation of eternity.

He then told me that he had a request to make to me; namely, that I would allow his servant Frank to look up to me as his friend, adviser, and protector, in all difficulties which his own weakness and imprudence, or the force or fraud of others, might bring him into. He said that he had left him what he considered an ample provision, viz. seventy pounds per annum; but that even that sum might not place him above the want of a protector, and to me, therefore, he recommended him as to one who had will, and power, and activity to protect him. Having obtained my assent to this, he proposed that Frank should be called in; and desiring me to take him by the hand in token of the promise, repeated before him the recommendation he had just made of him, and the promise I had given to attend to it.

I then took occasion to say how much I felt — what I had long foreseen that I should feel — regret at having spent so little of my life in his company. I stated this as an instance where resolutions are deferred till the occasions are past. For some time past I had determined that such an occasion of self-reproach should not subsist, and had built upon the hope of passing in his society the chief part of my time, at the moment when it was to be apprehended we were about to lose him for ever.

I had no difficulty in speaking to him thus of my apprehensions. I could not help, on the other hand, entertaining hopes, but with these I did not like to trouble him, lest he should conceive that I thought i necessary to flatter him: he answered hastily, that he

was sure I would not; and proceeded to make a compliment to the manliness of my mind, which, whether deserved or not, ought to be remembered, that it may be deserved.

I then stated, that among other neglects was the omission of introducing of all topics the most important, the consequence of which particularly filled my mind at that moment, and in which I had often been desirous to know his opinions; the subjects I meant were, I said, natural and revealed religion. The wish thus generally stated, was in part gratified on the instant. For revealed religion, he said, there was such historical evidence, as, upon any subject not religious, would have left no doubt. Had the *facts* recorded in the New Testament been mere civil occurrences, no one would have called in question the testimony by which they are established; but the importance annexed to them, amounting to nothing less than the salvation of mankind, raised a cloud in our minds, and created doubts unknown upon any other subject. Of proofs to be derived from history, one of the most cogent, he seemed to think, was the opinion so well authenticated, and so long entertained, of a deliverer that was to appear about that time. Among the typical representations, the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb, in which no bone was to be broken, had early struck his mind. For the immediate life and miracles of Christ, such attestation as that of the apostles, who all, except St. John, confirmed their testimony with their blood—such belief as these witnesses procured from a people best furnished with the means of judging, and least disposed to judge favourably—such an extension afterwards of that belief over all the nations of the earth, though originating from a nation of all others most despised, would leave no doubt that the things witnessed were true, and were of a nature more than human. With respect to evidence, Dr. Johnson observed that we had not such

evidence that Cæsar died in the Capitol, as that Christ died in the manner related.

December 11. — Went with Sir Joshua, whom I took up by the way, to see Dr. Johnson. Strahan and Langton there. No hopes; though a great discharge had taken place from the legs.

December 12. — At about half-past seven P. M. went to Dr. Johnson's, where I stayed, chiefly in the outer room, till past eleven. Strahan there during the whole time; during part Mr. Hoole; and latterly Mr. Cruikshanks and the apothecary. I only went in twice, for a few minutes each time: the first time I hinted only what they had before been urging; namely, that he would be prevailed upon to take some sustenance, and desisted upon his exclaiming, "'T is all very childish; let us hear no more of it." The second time I came in, in consequence of a consultation with Mr. Cruikshanks and the apothecary, and addressed him formally, after premising that I considered what I was going to say as matter of duty; I said that I hoped he would not suspect me of the weakness of importuning him to take nourishment for the purpose of prolonging his life for a few hours or days. I then stated what the reason was. It was to secure that which I was persuaded he was most anxious about; namely, that he might preserve his faculties entire to the last moment. Before I had quite stated my meaning, he interrupted me by saying, that he had refused no sustenance but inebriating sustenance; and proceeded to give instances where, in compliance with the wishes of his physician, he had taken even a small quantity of wine. I readily assented to any objections he might have to nourishment of that kind, and observing that milk was the only nourishment I intended, flattered myself that I had succeeded in my endeavours, when he recurred to his general refusal, and "begged that there might be an end of it." I then said, that I

hoped he would forgive my earnestness, or something to that effect, when he replied eagerly, that from me nothing could be necessary by way of apology; adding, with great fervour, in words which I shall, I hope, never forget, "God bless you, my dear Windham, through Jesus Christ;" and concluding with a wish "that we might [share] in some humble portion of that happiness which God might finally vouchsafe to repentant sinners." These were the last words I ever heard him speak. I hurried out of the room with tears in my eyes, and more affected than I had been on any former occasion.

December 13. — In the morning meant to have met Mr. Cruikshanks in Bolt Court; but while I was deliberating about going, was sent for by Mr. Burke. Went to Bolt Court about half-past three, found that Dr. Johnson had been almost constantly asleep since nine in the morning, and heard from Mr. Desmoulins what passed in the night. He had compelled Frank to give him a lancet, and had besides concealed in the bed a pair of scissors, and with one or the other of them had scarified himself in three places, two of them in the leg. On Mr. Desmoulins making a difficulty in giving him the lancet, he said, "Don't, if you have any scruple; but I will compel Frank:" and on Mr. Desmoulins attempting afterwards to prevent Frank from giving it to him, and at last to restrain his hand, he grew very outrageous, so as to call Frank scoundrel, and to threaten Mr. Desmoulins that he would stab him [1]; he then made the three incisions above men-

(1) See *antè*, p. 166. The reader will judge whether Boswell's or Hawkins's account of this transaction is the juster; but that more importance may not be given to it than it deserves, it must be recollected, that Johnson fancied that his attendants were treating him with a timid leniency, merely to spare him pain,— a notion which irritated, at once, his love of life, his animal courage, and his high moral principle. We have already seen (*antè* p. 187) that when in health he had said, "*Whoever is afraid of*

tioned, two of which were not, unskilfully made; but one of those in the leg was a deep and ugly wound, from which they suppose him to have lost at least eight ounces of blood.

Upon Dr. Heberden expressing his fears about the scarification, Dr. Johnson told him he was *timidorum timidissimus*. A few days before his death, talking with Dr. Brocklesby, he said, "Now will you ascribe my death to my having taken eight grains of squills, when you recommended only three? Dr. Heberden, to my having opened my left foot, when nature was pointing out the discharge in the right?" The conversation was introduced by his quoting some lines, to the same purpose, from Swift's verses on his own death.(1)

It was within the same period, if I understood Dr. Brocklesby right, that he enjoined him, as an honest man and a physician, to inform him how long he thought he had to live. Dr. Brocklesby inquired in return, whether he had firmness to bear the answer. Upon his replying that he had, and Dr. Brocklesby limiting the time to a few weeks, he said, "that he then would trouble himself no more with medicine or medical advice:" and to this resolution he pretty much adhered.

any thing is a scoundrel;" and now, in the same feeling, and the same words, he censures the cowardly, as he thought them, apprehensions of his attendants. It might be wished that in such circumstances he had spoken and acted with less impatience; but let us not forget the excuses which may be drawn from the natural infirmity of his temper, exasperated by the peevishness of a long and painful disease. — C.

(1) "The doctors, tender of their fame,
Wisely on me lay'all the blame:
'We must confess his case was nice,
But he would never take advice;
Had he been ruled, for aught appears,
He might have lived these twenty years;
For when we open'd him, we found
That all his vital parts were sound.'" — C.

In a conversation about what was practicable in medicine or surgery, he quoted, to the surprise of his physicians, the opinion of Marchetti for an operation of extracting (I think) part of the kidney. He recommended for an account of China, Sir John Mandeville's Travels. Holyday's Notes on Juvenal he thought so highly of as to have employed himself for some time in translating them into Latin.

He insisted on the doctrine of an expiatory sacrifice as the condition without which there was no Christianity; and urged in support the belief entertained in all ages, and by all nations, barbarous as well as polite. He recommended to Dr. Brocklesby, also, Clarke's Sermons, and repeated to him the passage which he had spoken of to me.

While airing one day with Dr. Brocklesby, in passing and returning by St. Pancras church, he fell into prayer, and mentioned, upon Dr. Brocklesby's inquiring why the Catholics chose that for their burying place, that some Catholics, in Queen Elizabeth's time, had been burnt there. (1) Upon Dr. Brocklesby's asking him whether he did not feel the warmth of the sun, he quoted from Juvenal —

> "Præterea minimus gelido jam in corpore sanguis
> Febre calet solâ." (2) —

December 13. — Forty-five minutes past ten P. M. —While writing the preceding articles — I received the fatal account, so long dreaded, that Dr. Johnson was no more!

(1) The reader will be aware that *other* causes have been assigned for this preference; but I learn, from unquestionable authority, that it rests upon no foundation, and that mere *prejudice* exists amongst the Roman Catholics in favour of this church, as is the case with respect to other places of burial in various parts of the kingdom. — MARKLAND.

(2) [" Add that a fever only warms his veins,
And thaws the little blood that yet remains." — GIFFORD.]

May those prayers which he incessantly poured from a heart fraught with the deepest devotion, find their acceptance with Him to whom they were addressed; which piety, so humble and so fervent, may seem to promise!

Part XIX.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON,

BY HANNAH MORE. (1)

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451. *Introduction to Johnson.*

Hannah More visited London in 1773 or 1774, in company with two of her sisters. The desire she had long felt to see Dr. Johnson was speedily gratified. Her first introduction to him took place at the house of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who prepared her, as he handed her up stairs, for the possibility of his being in one of his moods of sadness and silence. She was surprised at his coming to meet her as she entered the room, with good humour in his countenance, and a macaw of Sir Joshua's on his hand; and still more at his assisting her with a verse from a Morning Hymn, which she had written at the desire of Sir James Stonehouse. In the same pleasant humour he continued the whole of the evening.

(1) From the very interesting Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Hannah More, by William Roberts, Esq.

452. Visit to Bolt Court.

The most amiable and obliging of women, Miss Reynolds, ordered the coach to take us to Dr. Johnson's. The conversation turned upon a new work of his, just going to the press (the Journey to the Hebrides), and his old friend Richardson: Mrs. Williams, the blind poet, who lives with him, was introduced to us. She is engaging in her manners; her conversation lively and entertaining. Not finding Johnson in his little parlour when we came in, Hannah seated herself in his great chair, hoping to catch a little ray of his genius: when he heard it he laughed heartily, and told her it was a chair in which he never sat. He said it reminded him of Boswell and himself when they stopped a night at the spot (as they imagined) where the Weird Sisters appeared to Macbeth: the idea so worked upon their enthusiasm, that it quite deprived them of rest; however, they learned, the next morning, to their mortification, that they had been deceived, and were quite in another part of the country. (1)

453. "Sir Eldred of the Bower." — "The Bleeding Rock."

Johnson, full of wisdom and piety, was this evening very communicative. To enjoy Dr. Johnson perfectly, one must have him to one's self, as he seldom cares to speak in mixed parties. Our tea was not over till nine; we then fell upon "Sir Eldred:" he read both poems through, suggested some little alterations in the *first*, and did me the honour to write one whole stanza (2); but in the "Rock," he has not altered a word. Though only a tea visit, he stayed with us till twelve.

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. IV. p. 119., and Vol. V. p. 381.]

(2) The stanza beginning, "My scorn has oft, &c."

454. *Garrick and Johnson.*

My *petite assemblée* came at seven. The *dramatis personæ* were Mrs. Boscawen, Mrs. Garrick, and Miss Reynolds; my beaux were Dr. Johnson, Dean Tucker, and last, but not least in our love, David Garrick. You know that wherever Johnson is, the confinement to the tea-table is rather a durable situation. However, my ears were open, though my tongue was locked, and they all stayed till near eleven. Garrick was the very soul of the company, and I never saw Johnson in such perfect good-humour. We have often heard that one can never properly enjoy the company of these two unless they are together. There is great truth in this remark; for after the Dean and Mrs. Boscawen (who were the only strangers) were gone, Johnson and Garrick began a close encounter, telling old stories, "e'en from their boyish days," at Lichfield. We all stood round them above an hour, laughing in defiance of every rule of Chesterfield. I believe we should not have thought of sitting down or of parting, had not an impertinent watchman been saucily vociferous.

455. *Dean Tucker.*

I asked Dr. Johnson, what he thought of the Dean of Gloucester. His answer was *verbatim* as follows: "I look upon the Dean of Gloucester to be one of the most excellent writers of this period. I differ from him in opinion, and have expressed that difference in my writings; but I hope what I wrote did not indicate what I did not feel, for I felt no acrimony. No person, however learned, can read his writings without improvement. He is sure to find something he did not know before." I told him the Dean did not value himself on elegance of style. He said, "he knew nobody whose style was more perspicuous, manly, and vigorous, or better suited to his subject." I was not a little pleased with this tribute to the worthy Dean's merit,

from such a judge of merit; that man, too, professedly differing from him in opinion.

456. "Adventurer."—De Lolme.

Keeping bad company leads to all other bad things. I have got the headache to-day, by raking out so late with that gay libertine, Johnson. Do you know—I did not—that he wrote a quarter of the "Adventurer?"(1) I made him tell me all that he wrote in the "Fugitive Pieces." De Lolme (2) told me, that he thought Johnson's late political pamphlets were the best things he had written.

457. The Puritans.—Richard Baxter.

Dr. Johnson never opens his mouth but one learns something; one is sure either of hearing a new idea, or an old one expressed in an original manner. He scolded me heartily, as usual, when I differed from him in opinion, and, as usual, laughed when I flattered(3) him. I was very bold in combating some of his darling prejudices: nay, I ventured to defend one or two of the Puritans, whom I forced him to allow to be good men, and good writers. He said he was not angry with me at all for liking Baxter. He liked him himself; "but then," said he, "Baxter was bred up in the establishment, and would have died in it, if he could have got the living of Kidderminster. He was a very good man." Dr. Johnson was wrong; for Baxter was offered a bishopric after the Restoration.

(1) [For an account of Johnson's share in the "Adventurer," see antè, Vol. I. p. 300.]

(2) [A native of Geneva, and author of "The Constitution of England;" of which the first English edition appeared in 1775.]

(3) [On the subject of Miss More's flattery of Johnson, see antè, Vol. VII. p. 187., and p. 65. of the present volume.]

458. "Tom Jones." — "Joseph Andrews."

I never saw Johnson really angry with me but once, and his displeasure did him so much honour, that I loved him the better for it. I alluded, rather flippantly, I fear, to some witty passage in "Tom Jones:" he replied, "I am shocked to hear you quote from so vicious a book. I am sorry to hear you have read it: a confession which no modest lady should ever make. I scarcely know a more corrupt work." I thanked him for his correction; assured him that I thought full as ill of it now, as he did, and had only read it at an age when I was more subject to be caught by the wit, than able to discern the mischief. Of "Joseph Andrews" I declared my decided abhorrence. He went so far as to refuse to Fielding the great talents which are ascribed to him; and broke out into a noble panegyric on his competitor, Richardson; who, he said, was as superior to him in talents as in virtue; and whom he pronounced to be the greatest genius that had shed its lustre on this path of literature.

459. "Too many Irons in the Fire."

Mrs. Brooke(1) having repeatedly desired Johnson to look over her new play of "The Siege of Sinope" before it was acted, he always found means to evade it; at last she pressed him so closely that he actually refused to do it, and told her that she herself, by carefully looking it over, would be able to see if there was any thing amiss as well as he could. "But, Sir," said she, "I have no time, I have already so many irons in the fire." "Why then, Madam," said he, quite out of

(1) [The author of "Julia Mandeville," and "Emily Montagu," and also of the favourite comic opera of "Rosina." The "Siege of Sinope" was brought out at Covent Garden in 1781, but was only performed ten nights.]

patience, "the best thing I can advise you to do is, to put your tragedy along with your irons."

460. *Lord Lyttelton.—Mrs. Montagu.—Mr. Pepys.*

Think of Johnson's having apartments in Grosvenor Square. But he says it is not half so convenient as Bolt Court! He has just finished the Poets: Pope is the last. I am sorry he has lost so much credit by Lord Lyttelton's: he treats him almost with contempt; makes him out a poor writer, and an envious man; speaks well only of his "Conversion of St. Paul," of which he says, "it is sufficient to say it has never been answered." Mrs. Montagu and Mr. Pepys, his lordship's two chief surviving friends, are very angry.(1)

461. *Garrick.*

On Wednesday, Johnson came to see us, and made us a long visit. On Mrs. Garrick's telling him, she was always more at her ease with persons who had suffered the same loss with herself, he said that was a comfort she could seldom have, considering the superiority of her husband's merit, and the cordiality of their union. He bore his strong testimony to the liberality of Garrick. (1781.)

462. "*Pensées de Pascal.*"

He reproved me with pretended sharpness for reading "Les Pensées de Pascal," or any of the Port Royal authors; alleging that, as a good Protestant, I ought to abstain from books written by Catholics. I was beginning to stand upon my defence, when he took me with both hands, and with a tear running down his cheeks, "Child," said he, with the most affecting earnestness, "I am heartily glad that you read pious books, by whomsoever they may be written."

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 46.]

463. *Milton.*

On Monday, Johnson was in full song, and I quarrelled with him sadly. I accused him of not having done justice to the "Allegro" and "Penseroso." He spoke disparagingly of both. I praised "Lycidas," which he absolutely abused, adding, "If Milton had not written the 'Paradise Lost,' he would only have ranked among the minor poets: he was a Phidias that cut a Colossus out of a rock, but could not cut heads out of cherry stones."(1)

464. *Boswell and Garrick.*

Boswell brought to my mind the whole of a very mirthful conversation at dear Mrs. Garrick's; and my being made, by Sir William Forbes, the umpire in a trial of skill between Garrick and Boswell, which could most nearly imitate Dr. Johnson's manner. I remember I gave it for Boswell in familiar conversation, and for Garrick in reciting.

465. *The Club. — Garrick's Death.*

Poor Johnson is in a bad state of health. I fear his constitution is broken up; I am quite grieved at it. He will not leave an abler defender of religion and virtue behind him; and the following little touch of tenderness, which I heard of him last night from one of the Turk's Head Club, endears him to me exceedingly. There are always a great many candidates ready, when any vacancy happens in the club, and it requires no small interest and reputation to get elected; but, upon Garrick's death, when numberless applications were made to succeed him, Johnson was deaf to them all: he said, "No, there never could be found any successor worthy of such a man; and he insisted upon it there should be

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 306.]

a year's widowhood in the Club, before they thought of a new election. (1)

466. *Metaphysical Distresses.*

In Dr. Johnson, some contrarieties very harmoniously meet: if he has too little charity with the opinions of others, and too little patience for their faults, he has the greatest tenderness for their persons. He told me, the other day, he hated to hear people whine about metaphysical distresses, when there was so much want and hunger in the world. I told him I supposed, then, he never wept at any tragedy but Jane Shore, who died for want of a loaf. He called me saucy girl, but did not deny the inference. (1782.)

467. *Abstinence and Temperance.*

I dined very pleasantly at the Bishop of Chester's (Dr. Porteus). Johnson was there; and the Bishop was very desirous to draw him out, as he wished to show him off to some of the company who had never seen him. He begged me to sit next him at dinner and to devote myself to making him talk. To this end, I consented to talk more than became me; and our stratagem succeeded. You would have enjoyed seeing him take me by the hand in the middle of dinner, and repeat, with no small enthusiasm, many passages from the "Fair Penitent," &c. I urged him to take a *little* wine; he replied, "I can't drink a *little*, child; therefore I never touch it. Abstinence is as easy to me, as *temperance* would be difficult." He was very good-humoured and gay. One of the company happened to say a word about poetry; "Hush, hush!" said he, "it is dangerous to say a word of poetry before her; it is talking of the art of war before Hannibal."

(1) [Garrick died in January, 1779, and no new election took place till November, 1780; when Dr. Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph, was chosen a member.]

He continued his jokes, and lamented that I had not married Chatterton, that posterity might have seen a propagation of poets.

468. *Oxford.* — *Pembroke College.*

Who do you think is my principal Cicerone at Oxford? Only Dr. Johnson! and we do so gallant it about! You cannot imagine with what delight he showed me every part of his own college (Pembroke). Dr. Adams, the master, had contrived a very pretty piece of gallantry. We spent the day and evening at his house. After dinner, Johnson begged to conduct me to see the college; he would let no one show me it but himself. "This was my room; this Shenstone's." Then, after pointing out all the rooms of the poets who had been of his college, "In short," said he, "we were a nest of singing birds." — "Here we walked, there we played at cricket." He ran over with pleasure the history of the juvenile days he passed there. When we came into the common hall, we spied a fine large print of Johnson, framed and hung up that very morning, with this motto, "And is not Johnson ours, himself a host?" Under which stared you in the face, "From Miss More's 'Sensibility.'" This little incident amused us; — but, alas! Johnson looks very ill indeed — spiritless and wan. (June 13. 1782.)

469. *Jesuits and Jansenists.*

'Saturday, I went to Mrs. Reynolds's, to meet Sir Joshua and Dr. Johnson. Our conversation ran very much upon religious opinions, chiefly those of the Roman Catholics. He took the part of the Jesuits, and I declared myself a Jansenist. He was very angry because I quoted Boileau's bon-mot upon the Jesuits, that they had lengthened the Creed and shortened the Decalogue; but I continued sturdily to vindicate my old friends of the Port Royal. He looked so dreadfully,

that it quite grieved me. He is more mild and complacent than he used to be. His sickness seems to have softened his mind, without having at all weakened it. I was struck with the mild radiance of this setting sun. (1783.)

470. *"The Bas Bleu."*

I went to see Dr. Johnson. He received me with the greatest kindness and affection; and as to the Bas Bleu, all the flattery I ever received from every body together would not make up the sum. He said,—but I seriously insist you do not tell any body, for I am ashamed of writing it even to you,—he said, there was no name in poetry that might not be glad to own it.(1) You cannot imagine how I stared: all this from Johnson, the parsimonious praiser! I told him I was quite delighted at his approbation: he answered quite characteristically, "And so you may, for I give you the opinion of a man who does not rate his judgment on these things very low, I can tell you. (April. 1784.)

471. *Johnson's last Illness.*

Poor dear Johnson! he is past all hope. I have, however, the comfort to hear that his dread of dying is in a great measure subsided; and now he says "the bitterness of death is past." He sent the other day for Sir Joshua Reynolds; and after much serious conversation told him he had three favours to beg of him, and he hoped he would not refuse a dying friend, be they what they would. Sir Joshua promised. The first was, that he would never paint on a Sunday; the second, that he would forgive him thirty pounds that he had lent him, as he wanted to leave them to a distressed family; the third was, that he would read the Bible whenever he had an opportunity, and that he

(1) [See antè, p. 128.]

would never omit it on a Sunday. There was no difficulty but upon the *first* point; but at length Sir Joshua promised to gratify him in all. How delighted should I be to hear the dying discourse of this great and good man, especially now that faith has subdued his fears!

Mr. Pepys wrote me a very kind letter on the death of Johnson, thinking I should [illegible] to hear something relating to his last hours. [illegible], his physician, was with him; he said to him a little before he died, "Doctor, you are a worthy man, and my friend, but I am afraid you are not a Christian! What can I do better for you than offer up, in your presence, a prayer to the great God, that you may become a Christian in any sense of the word?" Instantly he fell on his knees, and put up a fervent prayer: when he got up he caught hold of his hand with great eagerness, and cried, "Doctor! you do not say, Amen!" The doctor looked foolish; but after a pause, cried, Amen! Johnson said, "My dear doctor, believe a dying man, there is no salvation but in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Go home, write down my prayer, and every word I have said, and bring it me to-morrow." Brocklesby did so.

A friend desired he would make his will; and as Hume, in his last moments, had made an impious declaration of his opinions, he thought it might tend to counteract the poison, if Johnson would make a public confession of his faith in his will. He said he would, seized the pen with great earnestness, and asked, what was the usual form of beginning a will? His friend told him. After the usual forms he wrote, "I offer up my soul to the great and merciful God; I offer it full of pollution, but in full assurance that it will be cleansed in the blood of my Redeemer." And for some time he wrote on with the same vigour and spirit as if he had been in perfect health. When he expressed some of

his former dread of dying, Sir John said, "If you, Doctor, have these fears, what is to become of others?" "Oh! Sir," said he, "I have written piously, it is true; but I have lived too much like other men." It was a consolation to him, however, in his last hours, that he had never written in derogation of religion or virtue. He talked of his death and funeral, at times, with [illegible]e. On the Monday following, D[illegible] he fell into a sound sleep, and continued in that state for twelve hours, and then [illegible] without a groan.

No action of his life became him like the [illegible]. His death makes a kind of era in literature; [illegible] goodness will not easily find a more able defender; and it is delightful to see him set, as it were, his dying seal to the professions of his life, and to the truth of Christianity.

472. *Abbé Raynal. — Sabbath-breakers.*

I now recollect, with melancholy pleasure, two little anecdotes of Dr. Johnson, indicating a zeal for religion which one cannot but admire, however characteristically rough. When the Abbé Raynal was introduced to him, upon the Abbé's advancing to shake his hand, the Doctor drew back, and put his hands behind him, and afterwards replied to the expostulation of a friend — "Sir, I will not shake hands with an infidel!" At another time, I remember asking him, if he did not think the Dean of Derry a very agreeable man, to which he made no answer; and on my repeating my question, "Child," said he, "I will not speak any thing in favour of a Sabbath-breaker, to please you, nor any one else."

PART XX.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON, BY BISHOP HORNE. (1)

473. *Johnson, and his Writings.*

WHEN a friend told Johnson that he was much blamed for having unveiled the weakness of Pope, "Sir," said he, "if one man undertake to write the life of another, he undertakes to exhibit his true and real character; but this can be done only by a faithful and accurate delineation of the particulars which discriminate that character."

The biographers of this great man seem conscientiously to have followed the rule thus laid down by him, and have very fairly communicated all they knew, whether to his advantage, or otherwise. Much concern, disquietude, and offence have been occasioned by this their conduct in the minds of many, who apprehend that the cause in which he stood forth will suffer by the infirmities of the advocate being thus exposed to the prying and malignant eye of the world.

But did these persons then ever suppose, or did they imagine that the world ever supposed, Dr. Johnson to have been a perfect character? Alas! no: we all know how that matter stands, if we ever look into our own hearts, and duly watch the current of our own thoughts, works, words, and actions. Johnson was honest, and kept a faithful diary of these, which is before the public. Let any man do the same for a

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. VIII. p. 427.]

fortnight, and publish it; and if, after that, he should find himself so disposed, let him "cast a stone." At that hour when the failings of all shall be made manifest, the attention of each individual will be confined to his own.

It is not merely the name of Johnson that is to do service to any cause. It is his genius, his learning, his good sense, the strength of his reasonings, and the happiness of his illustrations. These all are precisely what they were; once good, and always good. His arguments in favour of self-denial do not lose their force because he fasted, nor those in favour of devotion because he said his prayers. Grant his failings were, if possible, still greater than these; will a man refuse to be guided by the sound opinion of a counsel, or resist the salutary prescription of a physician, because they who give them are not without their faults? A man may do so, but he will never be accounted a wise man for doing it.

Johnson, it is said, was superstitious. But who shall exactly ascertain to us what superstition is? The Romanist is charged with it by the Church of England man; the churchman by the presbyterian, the presbyterian by the independent, all by the deist, and the deist by the atheist. With some it is superstitious to pray; with others, to receive the sacrament; with others, to believe in God. In some minds it springs from the most amiable disposition in the world—"a pious awe, and fear to have offended;" a wish rather to do too much than too little. Such a disposition one loves, and wishes always to find in a friend; and it cannot be disagreeable in the sight of Him who made us. It argues a sensibility of heart, a tenderness of conscience, and the fear of God. Let him who finds it not in himself beware, lest in flying from superstition he fall into irreligion and profaneness.

That persons of eminent talents and attainments in literature have been often complained of as dogmatical, boisterous, and inattentive to the rules of good breeding, is well known. But let us not expect every thing from any man. There was no occasion that Johnson should teach us to dance, to make bows or turn compliments; he could teach us better things. To reject wisdom because the person of him who communicates it is uncouth, and his manners are inelegant,—what is it but to throw away a pineapple, and assign for a reason the roughness of its coat? Who quarrels with a botanist for not being an astronomer? or with a moralist for not being a mathematician? As it is said, in concerns of a much higher nature, "Every man hath his gift — one after this manner, and another after that." It is our business to profit by all, and to learn of each that in which each is best qualified to instruct us.

That Johnson was generous and charitable, none can deny. But he was not always judicious in the selection of his objects: distress was a sufficient recommendation; and he did not scrutinise into the failings of the distressed. May it be always my lot to have such a benefactor! Some are so nice in a scrutiny of this kind that they can never find any proper objects of their benevolence, and are necessitated to save their money. It should doubtless be distributed in the best manner we are able to distribute it; but what would become of us all, if He on whose bounty all depend, should be extreme to mark that which is done amiss?

It is hard to judge any man, without a due consideration of all circumstances. Here were stupendous abilities and suitable attainments; but then here were hereditary disorders of body and mind reciprocally aggravating each other — a scrofulous frame, and a melancholy temper: here was a life, the greater part of which passed in making provision for the day, under

the pressure of poverty and sickness, sorrow and anguish. So far to gain the ascendant over these as to do what Johnson did, required very great strength of mind indeed. Who can say that, in a like situation, he should long have possessed or been able to exert it?

From the mixture of power and weakness in the composition of this wonderful man, the scholar should learn humility. It was designed to correct that pride which great parts and great learning are apt to produce in their possessor. In him it had the desired effect. For though consciousness of superiority might sometimes induce him to carry it high with man (and even this was much abated in the latter part of life), his devotions have shown to the whole world how humbly he walked at all times with his God.

His example may likewise encourage those of timid and gloomy dispositions not to despond, when they reflect that the vigour of such an intellect could not preserve its possessor from the depredations of melancholy. They will cease to be surprised and alarmed at the degree of their own sufferings; they will resolve to bear with patience and resignation the malady to which they find a Johnson subject as well as themselves: and if they want words in which to ask relief from him who alone can give it, the God of mercy and Father of all comfort, language affords no finer than those in which his prayers are conceived. Child of sorrow, whoever thou art, use them; and be thankful that the man existed by whose means thou hast them to use.

His eminence and his fame must of course have excited envy and malice; but let envy and malice look at his infirmities and his charities, and they will quickly melt into pity and love.

That he should not be conscious of the abilities with which Providence had blessed him was impossible. He

felt his own powers; he felt what he was capable of having performed; and he saw how little, comparatively speaking, he had performed. Hence his apprehensions on the near prospect of the account to be made, viewed through the medium of constitutional and morbid melancholy, which often excluded from his sight the bright beams of divine mercy. May those beams ever shine upon us! But let them not cause us to forget that talents have been bestowed of which an account must be rendered, and that the fate of the "unprofitable servant" may justly beget apprehensions in the stoutest mind. The indolent man who is without such apprehensions has never yet considered the subject as he ought. For one person who fears death too much, there are a thousand who do not fear enough, nor have thought in earnest about it. Let us only put in practice the duty of self-examination; let us inquire into the success we have experienced in our war against the passions, or even against undue indulgence of the common appetites—eating, drinking, and sleeping; we shall soon perceive how much more easy it is to form resolutions than to execute them, and shall no longer find occasion, perhaps, to wonder at the weakness of Johnson.

On the whole, in the memoirs of him that have been published, there are so many witty sayings and so many wise ones, by which the world, if it so please, may be at once entertained and improved, that I do not regret their publication. In this, as in all other instances, we are to adopt the good and reject the evil. The little stories of his oddities and his infirmities in common life will, after a while, be overlooked and forgotten; but his writings will live for ever, still more and more studied and admired, while Britons shall continue to be characterised by a love of elegance and sublimity, of good sense and virtue. The sincerity of his repentance,

the steadfastness of his faith, and the fervour of his charity, forbid us to doubt that his sun set in clouds to rise without them; and of this let us always be mindful, that every one who is made better by his books will add a wreath to his crown.

END OF THE NINTH VOLUME.